







































































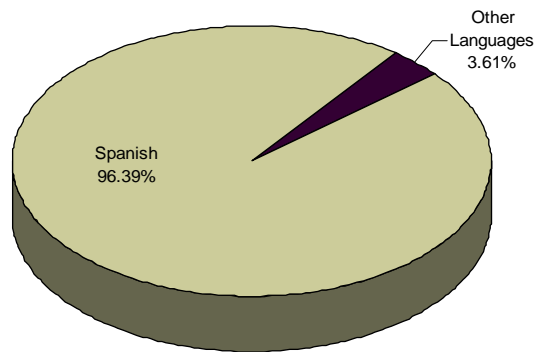




## Interpreting Unit

The Court provides interpreters in criminal and family court proceedings. The full-time lead interpreter is assisted by a pool of 25 per diem contractors, all of whom meet the professional standards set by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. The numbers of individuals needing interpreting services increased in 2010, but the number of available interpreters did not. The court increasingly relies on telephone interpreting services.

**2010 Interpreting Assignments**  
(Spanish in comparison with other languages used)



### Assignments per Language per Month

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total
Arabic	3	3	5	1	3	4	1	1	3	3	1	3	31
Burmese			1										1
Cantonese								1					1
Chinese								1					1
Italian								2					2
Karen										1			1
Macedonian	1								1		1		3
Mandarin	1	1		1									3
Polish	1												1
Portuguese	1						1	1					3
Punjabi			1									1	2
Russian	1	1	2		1								5
Sign Language	3	4	2	2	1	5	1	1		6	2	2	29
Spanish	256	225	288	248	232	241	218	226	243	225	221	177	2800
Tagalog				1									1
Tibetan										1	1		2
Turkish	1												1
Vietnamese	1	1	1		4	5	5	1					18
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>2905*</b>

\* The total number of assignments reflected herein does not include assignment for which telephonic interpreting services were utilized.

## **DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION**

The Lehigh County Domestic Relations Section, located at 14 North 6th Street, Allentown, started the year under the supervision of Director Rosemary C. McFee. Mrs. McFee retired in July 2010 after 33 years of service to the Lehigh County Courts. With 25 years of child support experience, Julia Parker Greenwood was hired to fill the director position and began management of the office on September 8, 2010. There are currently 13,073 active support cases in Lehigh County, with 5,884 new cases filed in 2010.

### **Establishing and Enforcing Child and Spousal Support Orders**

The Domestic Relations Section consists of 21 conference officers, 10 managers, and 40 full and part time support staff. The office is responsible for the establishment and enforcement of orders of child and spousal support for the court. This includes establishing paternity for children born out of wedlock, locating absent parents for support purposes and securing financial support for minor children of separated parents.

There are  
13,073 active support cases  
in Lehigh County.

In 2010,  
\$47,955,742 was  
collected and distributed.

Once an application for support is filed, a hearing is held with a conference officer to gather information for the preparation of an agreed support order or a proposed support order if no agreement can be reached. Support orders proposed by conference officers can be appealed to the court for a hearing before a master and then before a judge.

Conference Officers are also responsible for ensuring compliance with the support orders by holding contempt conferences to get payments back on track and by referring cases for a contempt hearing before a judge for failure to meet the support obligations.

### **2010 Case Management Caseload System Changes**

In 2010, the DRS office reorganized into a case management caseload system. Previously officers were assigned as either conference officers or enforcement officers, and performed duties within their assigned unit only. Officers are now assigned to case management teams and no longer have specialized duties. The conference officers are now responsible for all aspects of a support case from establishment through enforcement with the goal of establishing enforceable orders of support to benefit the children for whom support is owed.

In 2010, Domestic Relations staff conducted 4,745 establishment conferences and 581 establishment hearings. In addition, 2,916 judicial contempt hearings were conducted.

### **PACSES and SCDU**

The Pennsylvania Child Support Enforcement System (PACSES) is a state-wide computer and check disbursement system which was implemented in 1998, and is used as the database for child support case information, support calculations and enforcement actions. Payments are made to and disbursed from the state level office, the Support Collection and Disbursement Unit (SCDU).

Domestic Relations is responsible for the collection of support funds from the defendant in the action and disbursement of those funds to the plaintiff. In 2009, the total amount collected and then disbursed to the plaintiffs was \$45,054,479. In 2010, that figure was \$47,955,742, an increase of more than 6% over the previous year.

### **Federal Funding Requirements**

The Lehigh County Domestic Relations Section, through a Cooperative Agreement between Lehigh County and the Pennsylvania Bureau of Child Support Enforcement, is required to provide child support services as outlines in Title IV-D of the Social Security Act in order to receive federal funding. These child support services must be performed in accordance with Federal Code of Regulations and Pennsylvania Rule of Civil Procedure. As long as the DRS in performing as required, 66% of DRS operating expenses are reimbursed by the federal government.

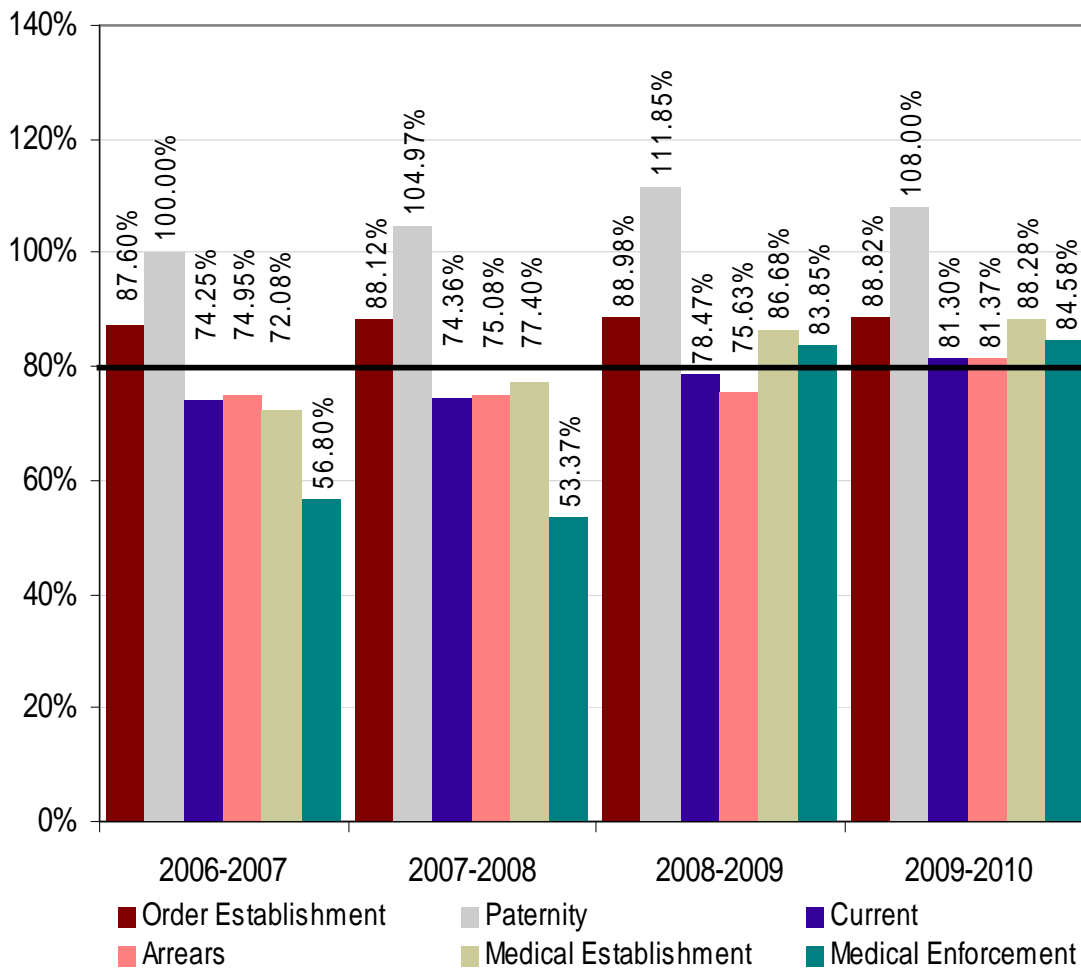
In addition, as a VI-D agency, the DRS is required to meet federal performance standards. To maximize incentive funds for Pennsylvania and Lehigh County, the benchmark of 80% must be met in the following categories:

- Cases with active support orders
- Cases with paternity established
- Cases with full monthly collection of current support
- Case with a payment on arrears (back support) during the federal fiscal year
- Case with medical support established—not tied to funding in 2010
- Cases with medical support enforced—not tied to funding in 2010

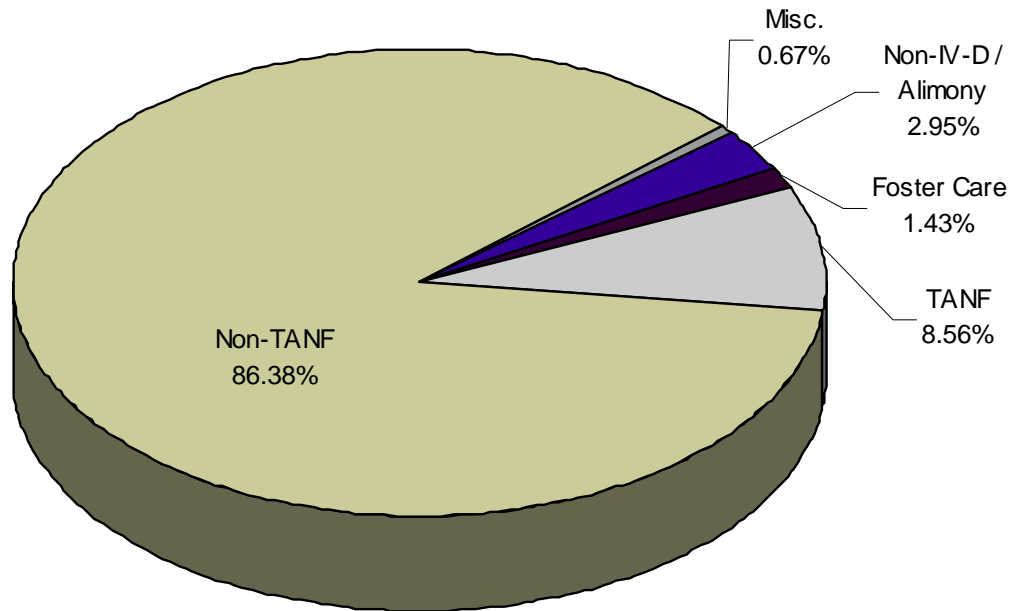
### 2010 Domestic Relations Federal Performance Standards

Federal Fiscal Year 2010, which ended on September 30, 2010, was the first year that Lehigh County Domestic Relations exceeded 80% in all the federal performance standards.

DRS Federal Performance Indicators



**Support Cases By Case Type**



2010 Support Case Filings & Dispositions	
New *Non-TANF Cases	5468
Cases Transferred In	84
*TANF to Non-TANF	325
Judge	78
Hearing Officer	340
Conference Officer	4865
Cases Transferred Out	79
Non-TANF to TANF	505
Cases Processed	5867

2010 TANF Support Case Filings & Dispositions	
New TANF Cases	416
Cases Transferred In	15
Non-TANF to TANF	505
Judge	3
Hearing Officer	24
Conference Officer	593
Cases Transferred Out	20
TANF to Non-TANF	325
Cases Processed	965

**\*TANF cases involve children in families receiving aid under the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program. Non-TANF cases are those cases with no such assistance.**

## ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION

The name Orphans' Court is an anachronism derived from an era in which those persons who traditionally had no legal "voice" (minor children, widows, orphans, decedents) required an objective entity—the Orphans' Court—to "speak" for them and assure that their rights and interests were protected. Unlike the other divisions of the Court of Common Pleas, many of the matters that come before the Orphans' Court are non-adversarial.

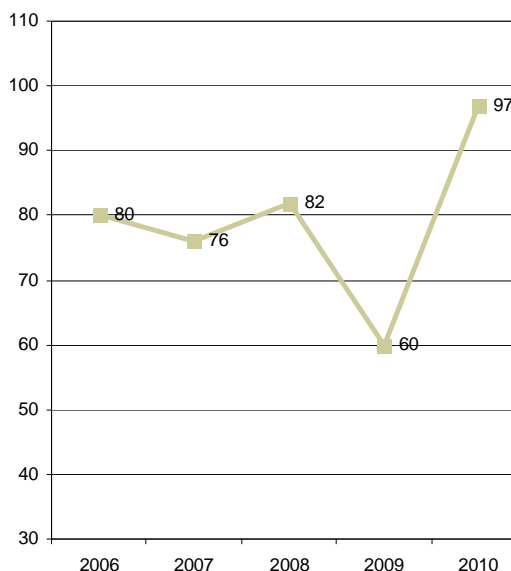
### The Office of the Clerk of the Orphans' Court Division

The Office of the Clerk of the Orphans' Court Division is a judicial office distinct from the Register of Wills, (which in Lehigh County is a division within the Office of the Clerk of Judicial Records). In addition, the scheduling of all Orphans' Court cases is done by the Office of the Clerk of the Orphans' Court and not by the Court Administrator's Office. The Orphans' Court Division of the Court of Common Pleas is under the direction of the Director of Orphans' Court Operations, Janet T. Woffindin, Esquire, and the Clerk of the Orphans' Court, Wendy A. W. Parr. There are three full time assistant clerks and a full-time auditor who reviews all formally filed fiduciary accounts. There are currently five judges, including an Administrative Judge, assigned to the various matters within the jurisdiction of the Orphans' Court Division.

### Orphans' Court Jurisdiction

After the grant of letters and payment of inheritance taxes (accomplished through the Register of Wills), all matters and/or disputes regarding wills and other aspects of the administration of decedents' estates are heard in the Orphans' Court Division. The Orphans' Court is also charged with the responsibility of overseeing the administration of both private and charitable inter vivos and testamentary trusts, powers of attorney and matters involving not-for-profit organizations. The Orphans' Court hears all parental termination cases, adoptions and minors' guardianship cases, as well as judicial bypass hearings required by the Abortion Control Act, and responds to all requests for access to both identifying and non-

Orphans' Court Adoptions Filed  
2006-2010



# Orphans Court Filings 2010

Filings & Dispositions for Orphans' Court Accounts	
Beginning Pending	15
New Cases	54
Cases Available	69
Contested Judge	15
Contested Master	0
Uncontested Dispositions	19
Other	9
Cases Processed	43
Ending Pending	26
Clearance Ratio	0.80
Backlog Index	0.35

Filings & Dispositions for Orphans' Court Guardianships	
Beginning Pending	44
New Cases	116
Cases Available	160
Contested Judge	20
Contested Master	0
Uncontested Dispositions	72
Other	28
Cases Processed	120
Ending Pending	40
Clearance Ratio	1.03
Backlog Index	0.37

Filings & Dispositions for Orphans' Court Adoptions	
Beginning Pending	10
New Cases	97
Cases Available	107
Contested Judge	4
Contested Judge-Denied	0
Contested Master	0
Uncontested Dispositions	94
Other	3
Cases Processed	101
Ending Pending	6
Clearance Ratio	1.04
Backlog Index	0.10

Filings & Dispositions for Orphans' Court Terminations	
Beginning Pending	33
New Cases	49
Cases Available	82
Contested Judge	24
Contested Master	1
Uncontested Dispositions	21
Other	11
Cases Processed	57
Ending Pending	25
Clearance Ratio	1.16
Backlog Index	0.58

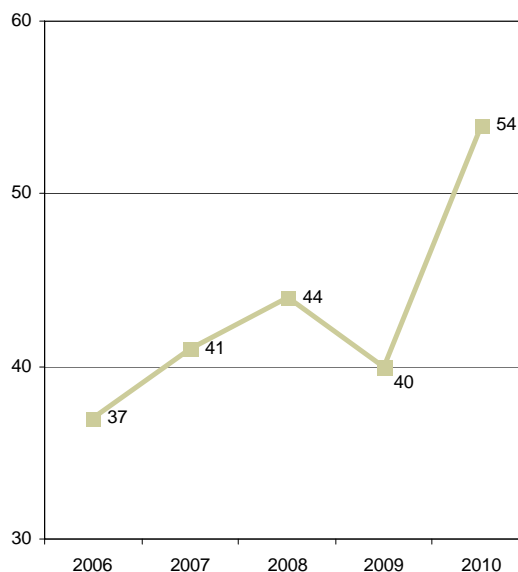


identifying information from adoption files. In Lehigh County, settlement of lawsuits or claims involving minors, incapacitated persons and/or decedents' estates must be approved by the Orphans' Court Division to assure proper allocation of proceeds and preservation of monetary awards during minority. The Orphans' Court hears petitions for adjudication of incapacity and appointment of both guardians of the person and estate regarding those adults who can not safely manage their own affairs. Finally, the Clerk of the Orphans' Court is responsible for issuing marriage licenses upon "in person" application by couples, maintaining marriage license records, and issuing certified copies thereof.

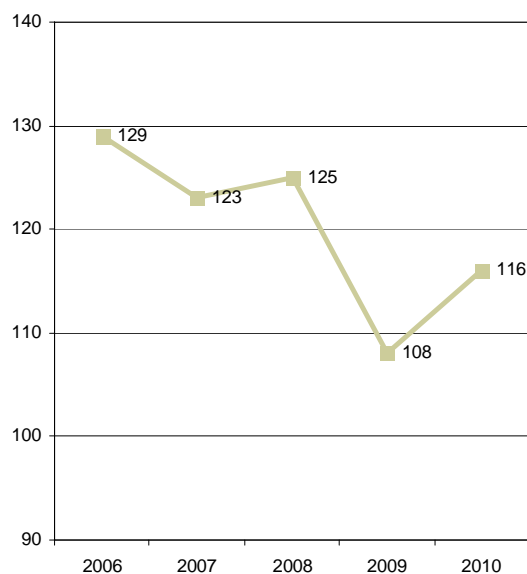
#### Challenges Unique to Orphans' Court

- Statutory requirement to appoint counsel to represent each indigent parent who contests the termination of his/her parental rights, (not uncommon for there to be more than one father involved in most cases), and counsel to represent the minor child.
- Necessity to appoint guardians ad litem and/or counsel in guardianship proceedings to protect the interests of AIP (alleged incapacitated person).
- Statutory prohibition on imposition of filing fee for petitions for review hearing in incapacity cases.
- Statutory prohibition on imposition of filing fee for Judicial Bypass Hearings.

Orphans' Court Accounts Filings  
2006-2010



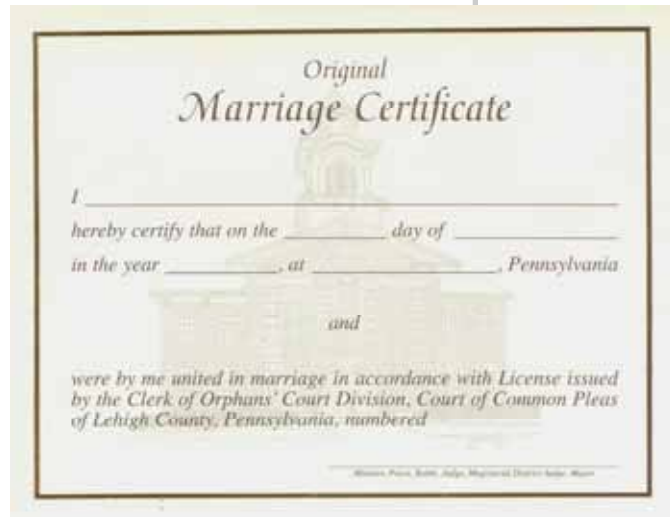
Orphans' Court Guardianship Filings  
2006-2010



## 2010 Orphans' Court Division Highlights

In 2010, the Orphans Court:

- Issued 2,077 marriage licenses.
- Audited, confirmed and adjudicated 43 fiduciary accountings.
- Freed 57 children for adoption following the termination of the parental rights of their biological parents.
- Granted 101 adoptions.
- Appointed guardians of the person for 31 minors.
- Adjudicated 120 persons incapacitated and appointed guardians for their persons and/or estates.
- Held 22 judicial bypass hearings pursuant to the Abortion Control Act.
- Approved 79 minors' settlements involving lump sum payouts, creation of trusts, and structured settlements and in excess of a dozen death case settlements.
- Resolved petitions regarding contested wills, joint asset ownership problems, inheritance tax disputes, use of powers of attorney, either via hearing or court-assisted settlement.
- Responded to a steady number of requests by adoptees for information about their biological parents, and conducted adoption searches. These requests are expected to increase with the April 25, 2011 effective date of amendments to the Adoption Act that expand the classes of person who can initiate an adoption search.



## ADULT PROBATION DEPARTMENT

### Primary Functions

- Supervision of adult offenders (age 18 and above) who are court ordered to probation, parole, ARD, and Intermediate Punishment.
- Completion of presentence investigations as an aid in sentencing.
- Completion and verification of preparole plans and investigations, in preparation for an offender's release from incarceration.
- Victim Services – victim impact statements, release notifications, enforcement of restitution orders.

### Adult Probation Mission Statement

To aid in reducing the incidents of crime in the community through field-based supervision, treatment and rehabilitation of the offender, thus protecting the public from recurring criminal and antisocial behavior.

### Community Corrections Policy – Restorative Justice

Although community protection through traditional community based casework and surveillance remains a high priority, offenders are also required to acquire specific skills through educational and job readiness programs. This approach also makes them accountable for the satisfaction of financial liabilities such as victim restitution, fines and program fees.

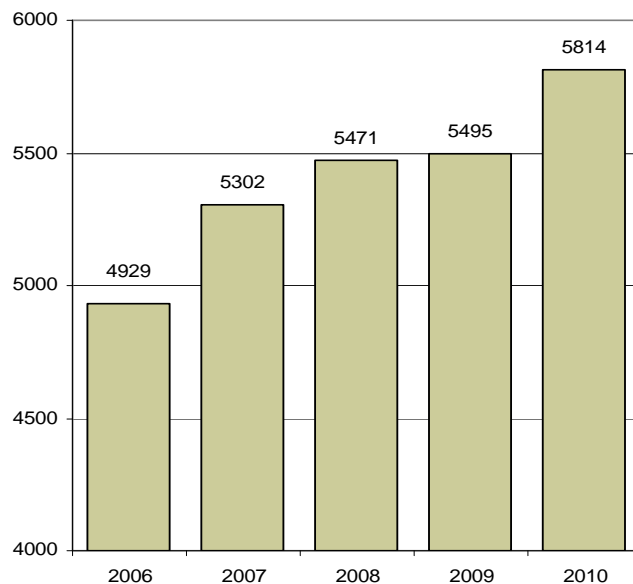
### Supervision and Caseload Trends

As of December 31, 2010, there were 5,814 offenders on active supervision with the Department, an increase of 5.8% over the previous year.

### Pre-Sentence Investigation Trends

The Pre-Sentence Investigation Unit is responsible for interviewing offenders, verifying and evaluating information, contacting victims and police officers, preparation of sentencing guidelines,

Supervision Trends (# offenders)  
2006-2010



and making recommendations to the Court relative to an offender's sentence. In 2010, 678 pre-sentence investigations were completed, up 5.4% over 2009.

### Pre-Parole Trends

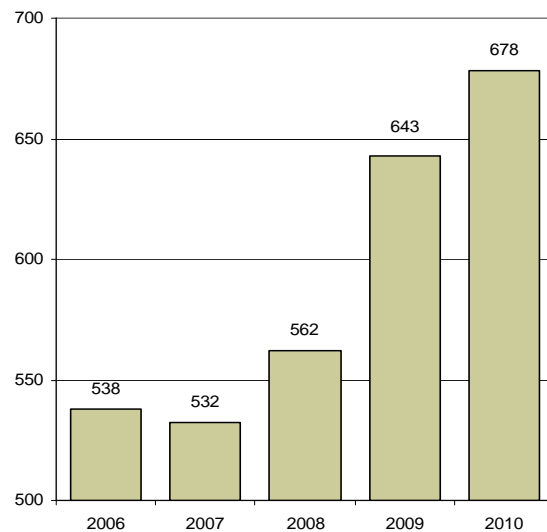
The Court of Common Pleas is the paroling authority for all cases sentenced to a maximum term of imprisonment of less than two years. The Department is responsible for investigating parole plans and for recommendations to the paroling authority.

Pre-parole services include post-sentencing interviews with inmates, compliance with Acts 134 and 155 relative to victims, the calculation and utilization of the *Earned Time Program*, and verification of information submitted by inmates for parole plans. DNA registration and Megan's Law compliance are also ensured by this unit. In 2010, 1,446 parole plans were investigated, a decrease of 6.0% over 2009.

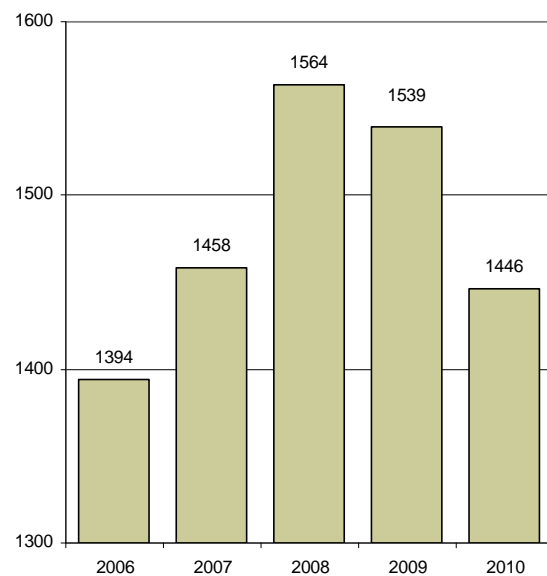
### Standards and Accreditation

The Lehigh County Adult Probation Department continues to be in compliance with all standards relative to Commission on Accreditation for Corrections guidelines for probation and parole agencies. Standards audits and reports conducted by the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole reflect positively on the department's staff, goals and accomplishments.

Pre-Sentence Investigation Trends  
2006-2010



Pre-Parole Trends  
2006-2010



## Adult Probation Department Programs

**The Alcohol Highway Safety Project** is court-operated and administered by the department to deal with Driving Under the Influence offenders. The four components are: evaluation and screening via the Court Reporting Network Evaluation; operation of the Alcohol Highway Safe-Driving School; community information and education; and assistance to law enforcement, government and court-related agencies to improve techniques to identify and apprehend problem alcohol and drug abusers who drive in Lehigh County. The department continued in its efforts to alert the public to the dangers of drinking and driving through presentations at local community organizations, agencies and schools. This included lectures, displays and distribution of information. The department also coordinated efforts with area student organizations providing information to their fellow students.



The Adult Probation Department continues to assist law enforcement in identifying and apprehending problem alcohol and drug abusers in Lehigh County.

**The Interlock Ignition Program** involves the installation of a device on the vehicle, where detection of alcohol prohibits the vehicle from starting. Interlock is a main component of the DUI Repeat Offender Project, in which the department provides early and increased levels of treatment, education, supervision and surveillance of repeat Driving Under the Influence offenders. Included are classroom instruction, outpatient counseling, electronic monitoring and substance abuse testing.

**The Community Corrections Center** was established as an alternative to incarceration for technical violators of probation/parole/Intermediate Punishment. PCCD funding assisted in this project becoming operational in 2009. Administered by the Departments of Corrections, Adult Probation and Human Services, an array of services are provided to offenders on-site at the Men's Community Corrections Center to prepare for their re-entry back into the community. Programming includes: Substance Abuse Assessment, Intervention and Treatment; Employment and Vocational Training; Mental Health Group Services; Education/GED Preparation and Testing; and various life skills programs.

**The Community Work Service Project** allows offenders to provide volunteer services to agencies and organizations as a condition of probation, Intermediate Punishment, parole, ARD, or in lieu of fines.

## Electronic Monitoring

The Adult Probation Department provides **Electronic Monitoring** supervision for offenders as an alternative to incarceration. Offenders may be ordered to the program as an intermediate punishment, as a condition of early release or furlough from prison, as an intermediate graduated sanction for violation of community supervision requirements, or on bail supervision.

Offenders are monitored by an active satellite system of surveillance called global positioning, which replaced the RF ankle bracelet system in 2005. The probation officer carries a pager, providing twenty-four hour coverage, including weekends. The pager notifies the officer of any violations (leave alerts). Field visits and surveillance are integral components of the program, as are random field testing and video-breath analysis.



Twenty-four hour, seven days a week, Electronic Monitoring of offenders is achieved through the use of satellite and cellular telephone links to the offender's ankle bracelet system seen below.



The Department sustained **Competency/Accountability Programs** with the continuation of its interagency agreement in 2010 with the Center for Humanistic Change to provide off-site instruction to offenders, based on needs areas assessed upon their assignment to supervision. The main component of the Department's Intermediate Punishment Restorative Sanctions, the following services were made available to offenders: Financial Management; Health Education; Job Readiness Training; Life Skills; Retail Theft Rehabilitation; and Substance Abuse Education.

The Department has operated an **Intensive Drug Supervision Unit** since 1989. Supervision of clients who have severe substance-abuse problems on an intensive basis increases surveillance, thus adding to the safety and protection of the community. Clients benefit from the unit's services through identification and counseling/treatment.

The Department initiated an **In-House Drug Testing Program** in 1988 to detect possible illegal drug use by clients. The Department uses the OnTrak Teststik system, which is advantageous because clients know they can be tested by probation officers with immediate results in their presence.

#### Adult Probation Client Profile

<b>Sex</b>		<b>Offense Type</b>	
■ Male	75.6%	■ Felony	22.5%
■ Female	24.4%	■ Misdemeanor	74.0%
<b>Race</b>		■ Other	3.4%
■ White	60.3%	<b>Disposition</b>	
■ Black	16.3%	■ Probation	30.2%
■ Hispanic	21.8%	■ Parole	41.9%
■ Other	1.7%	■ ARD	24.6%
		■ I.P.	3.3%

**The Special Program for Offenders in Rehabilitation and Education** is more commonly known as S.P.O.R.E. This program continues to provide services for mentally ill offenders. Probation officers and mental health workers jointly supervise clients. A psychiatrist and psychologist are available for evaluations.

**The Treatment Continuum Alternative Project** is a grant-funded project which utilizes the resources of the Adult Probation Department and Treatment Trends, Inc. to administer a 34 month continuum of care to level 3 and 4 substance-abusing offenders. The continuum is comprised of four to six months of residential treatment at Keenan House, followed by two to four months in a local halfway home environment. Upon release, the offender receives intensive outpatient and outpatient treatment, and is electronically monitored by the Adult Probation Department. This is then followed by two months under intensive probation supervision. It is at this point that a decision is made relative to the remaining court-ordered 12 months of supervision and its intensity.

## JUVENILE PROBATION DEPARTMENT

The Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department is a division of the Court of Common Pleas, reporting to the Administrative Judge responsible for Juvenile Probation activities.

The department, under the supervision of Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Elizabeth Fritz, is responsible to the court and the community for delivering necessary and appropriate services to those juveniles referred to the department.

### Jurisdiction

The jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court and the Juvenile Probation Department extends to both “delinquent” and “dependent” children as defined in the Pennsylvania Juvenile Act, Section 6302. In light of the mandate of this Act, it is essential for the Department to have operational principles to guide its decision making and delivery of services. Accordingly, operational procedures have been formulated to coincide with “**The Balanced Approach**” principles:

1. **Community Protection:** Residents have a right to live in a safe and secure community. Probation Officer’s decisions must take into account the risk that each child poses and the degree of structure required to protect the community.
2. **Accountability:** Every juvenile offender is to be held accountable for his or her actions and behavior. When a juvenile commits an offense against a person or property, the juvenile incurs an obligation to the victim of that offense. Victims are to be compensated by the offender as a rehabilitative measure.



Many juveniles perform their community service at the Allentown Recycling Center which produces all of the proceeds for the department’s restitution program.

### Mission Statement:

**To foster prevention and reduction of juvenile crime; respond to the needs of the victim; promote community safety, restoration and development; and empower youth and their families through the interaction of the court.**

3. **Competency Development:** The Department assesses each youth to determine how they can best become productive and responsible citizens. This is that part of our mission “that seeks to tap the strengths of young people, their immense capacity for change and growth, in order to achieve transformations.”



## Evidence Based Practices

The Juvenile Probation Department has undertaken some exciting initiatives in recent years in an effort to implement evidence based practices. **Evidence based practices are those documented, research based and proven methods of treatment and supervision that have been demonstrated to reduce juvenile reoffending.**

In the past two years, probation officers have been trained in the following areas: the use of a validated risk/need assessment, the development of meaningful and effective case plans, a detention risk instrument, motivational interviewing, family group conferencing, and evidence based probation as it pertains to caseload supervision. The training and use of the risk/need assessment (YLS/CMI) is a critical first step in the development of case plans that specifically address those areas of a youth's life that are likely to lead to continued delinquent behavior. The use of a risk/need assessment will determine the level of risk the youth poses to the community and intervention strategies to most effectively impact change in the individual. Enhancing probation officers skills in these critical areas will be the main focus of staff development in the foreseeable future.

### 2010 Juvenile Probation Offenders by Gender\*

Male Offenders	75%
Female Offenders	25%

\*The percentage of male and female offenders rarely deviates by a percentage point.

## 2010 Juvenile Probation Highlights

In addition to the extensive training the staff has undergone, there were also two other significant developments. An **Evening Reporting Center (ERC)** operated by the Children's Home of Reading was initiated in September. The ERC was initiated as an alternative to secure detention. The program is modeled after a similar one in Berks County, and it shows great promise to reduce secure detention numbers while providing intensive programming. All juveniles in the program are monitored by electronic monitoring via GPS so as to reduce their risk to the community.

Before



After



Juveniles performing Community Service help St. Paul's Church conquer the weeds.

In March 2010, a new computer system was introduced in the Juvenile Probation Department. The new system is the **Pennsylvania Juvenile Case Management System (JCMS)** and it replaced the county operated system that had been in use since 1995. The new system is shared by sixty-five Pennsylvania counties. Probation officers and support staff have all been trained on its use. It is the department's goal to maximize the use of this system to assist management in its decision making and to record essential probation related activities. This will further assist the department in gathering accurate statistics as we strive toward making data driven decisions.

### **Collaborative Projects and Justice Panels**

The Juvenile Probation Department continued to work in collaboration with other County agencies and the community to develop prevention and diversion programs. **Community Justice Panels**, facilitated by The Impact Project, Inc. of Emmaus, accepted 203 cases last year. Seventy-four (74) of these originated with our department and the remainder were referred directly by police departments and magisterial district judges for misdemeanor and summary offenses.



**A young man participating in the Baum School of Art Program.**

**School Justice Panels** continue in the Allentown School District middle schools, as a pre-adjudication diversion initiative. Youth involved in summary and low grade misdemeanors, when appropriate, are provided the opportunity to be diverted to a panel where they are held accountable through various contractual obligations including restitution to the victim. If identified as necessary, other treatment interventions are provided to the youth. These panels attempt to prevent young middle school students from entering the delinquency system by giving them treatment opportunities at an earlier age.

The Impact Project, Inc. also coordinates the **Mentor Program** in cooperation with Moravian, Muhlenberg, Cedar Crest and Lehigh County Community Colleges. Referred youth are matched with college students for tutoring and mentoring. The Juvenile Probation Department has had representation on **Truancy Panels** at Mosser Elementary School on the city's east side. This was a project spearheaded by the County's Office of Children and Youth Services, but it also included other county departments and the Allentown School District and Mosser Village.

In the past few years, the Juvenile Probation Department and the **Office of Children and Youth** have made a concerted effort to work cooperatively on shared cases. We continue to identify these common cases, and probation officers and caseworkers are required to meet to discuss shared case responsibilities, attend each others hearings and jointly discuss supervision strategies. This has been instrumental in eliminating the duplication of services and presenting families with a more seamless treatment plan. The County of Lehigh has recently been selected to participate in the **Pennsylvania Systems of Care** initiative which will help guide our interactions and handling of multi-system youth with mental health involvement. This effort will continue to enhance our partnership and collaborative relationship with other county departments.

### Juvenile Probation Department Programs

In addition to the above noted cooperative efforts, the department operates a number of its own programs. These include the following: Retail Theft, Underage Drinking, Young Offenders, Community Alternative Work Service (CAWS) and Victim Awareness.

- The **Retail Theft and Underage Drinking programs** accept referrals from magisterial district judges and participants attend in lieu of fines.
- The **Young Offender program** is for youth between the ages 10 to 13. It includes classroom instruction that concentrates on the core principles of the Balanced Approach and Restorative Justice model.
- The **CAWS programs** are primarily responsible for providing community service opportunity to hold youth accountable for the delinquent offenses. It also provides an opportunity for the youth to repay their victims through revenue generated by the Allentown Recycling Center.
- The **Victim Awareness program** is a state curriculum that all of the probation officers have been trained to instruct. The curriculum teaches the youth the impact their crimes have had on their victims and the community with the hopes of increasing their empathy and understanding of the consequences of their actions.



Artwork produced by Juvenile Probation clients participating in the Baum School of Art Program.

### Juvenile Probation Primary Dispositions

Juvenile Probation Primary Dispositions					
Year	Referrals	Informal Adjustment	Consent Decree	Probation	Placement
2010	1570	219	191	385	238
2009	1700	240	158	455	271

Records for the Department indicate that referrals decreased by about 8% from 2009 to 2010. In that same period, dispositions for placement decreased by 12%. Although there were fewer referrals, there was a significant spike in several categories of serious offenses. The Juvenile Probation Department received 59 allegations for serious sexual offenses in 2010 compared to 9 in 2009. There was also an increase in robberies. The department received 108 allegations of robbery last year compared to 68 in the prior year. Otherwise, Lehigh County has been consistent with the rest of the state and country in experiencing a decrease in referrals.

#### Outcomes on 517 Juvenile Probation Cases Completed in 2010

Juveniles who completed a community service obligation in full <sup>1</sup>	95%
Juveniles in school or employed at case closing	84%
Juveniles who paid their restitution in full <sup>2</sup>	60%
Juveniles who re-offended while under supervision	19%
Juveniles with a technical violation of probation requiring further court action	19%
Juveniles committed to placement (28 days or longer)	22%

### Juvenile Probation Outcome Measures

Probation officers are required to report outcome measures whenever they release a juvenile from probation supervision. These outcomes only measure activities while under supervision and do not measure variables such as juveniles who re-offend after their case is closed. Juvenile Probation constantly monitors and evaluates these outcomes to determinate the effectiveness of programming and services.

## MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURTS

### Magisterial District Courts Jurisdiction

There are fourteen District Courts in the Thirty-First Judicial District that comprises Lehigh County. These are courts of limited jurisdiction and are not courts of record, but often are the courts with which the average citizen has the most contact. These courts hold trials on summary cases such as traffic violations, bad check cases, school truancy, underage drinking, and similar types of cases.

2010 Lehigh County District Courts Case Filings	
Summary Traffic Cases	51,300
Summary Non-Traffic Cases	15,448
Civil Cases	10,200
Criminal Cases	6,874

District Courts can enter dispositions graded up to a misdemeanor of the second degree for cases of Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol. In the area of civil law, District Courts can hold trials on civil disputes with a maximum monetary limit of \$12,000 and also disputes between landlords and tenants. These landlord cases can result in evictions of tenants from rental properties.

In the more serious criminal cases, higher level misdemeanors and felonies, District Courts conduct the initial hearings, including preliminary arraignments and preliminary hearings. All preliminary arraignments are conducted using **video technology**. The defendant is held in the secure environment of the **Central Booking Center** and the Magisterial District Judge presides over the hearing from their courtrooms.



While District Court 31-2-01 is located in the Old Lehigh County Courthouse, above, the other MDJ offices are located throughout Lehigh County.

At the preliminary arraignment, the criminal charges are read to the defendant, the bail amount is set, and the Magisterial District Judge schedules the preliminary hearing date. At the preliminary hearing, the court conducts a hearing to determine if there is sufficient evidence for the case to proceed to trial. If so, the case is forwarded to the Court of Common Pleas, which is the court of general jurisdiction. If the evidence presented at the preliminary hearing does not support the criminal charges, the charges will be dismissed. The date of arraignment in the Court of Common Pleas is established at the conclusion of the preliminary hearing.

### Magisterial District Judges

The judges of the District Courts are referred to as **Magisterial District Judges**, and are elected officials serving six-year terms. A change in the title of these elected officials from District Justice to Magisterial District Judge occurred in 2005. The magisterial district judges are elected within magisterial districts, which comprise the geographic boundaries of their jurisdictions.

### Night Court and Central Court

Lehigh County contains **fourteen magisterial districts**. In addition, the Lehigh County District Court System includes a **Central Court and a Night Court**. Central Court operates to schedule and preside over the preliminary hearings of all incarcerated defendants. The magisterial district judges of the fourteen individual districts are assigned to preside in Central Court utilizing a rotating daily schedule.

**Night Court** operates to handle the preliminary arraignments of all defendants who are arrested within the county after the normal operating hours of the courthouse. The assignment of a Magisterial District Judge is also completed based upon a rotating schedule of the fourteen District Judges of the individual districts. In addition, Night Court operates to facilitate the payment of bail for incarcerated defendants, preside over matters related to warrants served by Constables and issue **Protection from Abuse (PFA)** orders in matters of domestic violence.

The supervision of each District Court is the responsibility of the elected Magisterial District Judge, a state employee. The employees within the specific office, however, are County judicial employees and the personnel and administrative functions fall under the responsibility of the District Justice Administrator, H. Gordon Roberts.

2010 Magisterial District Judges	
District Court	Magisterial District Judges
31-1-01	Patricia M. Engler
31-1-02	Maryesther S. Merlo, Esquire
31-1-03	Ronald S. Manescu
31-1-04	David G. Leh
31-1-05	Carl L. Balliet
31-1-06	Wayne Maura
31-1-07	Robert C. Halal
31-1-08	Anthony G. Rapp
31-2-01	Karen C. Devine
31-2-02	Jacob E. Hammond
31-2-03	Donna R. Butler
31-3-01	Rod R. Beck
31-3-02	Charles H. Crawford
31-3-03	David B. Harding

NOTES