

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF LEHIGH COUNTY

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF
GROUNDBREAKING FOR THE
NEW LEHIGH COUNTY COURTHOUSE



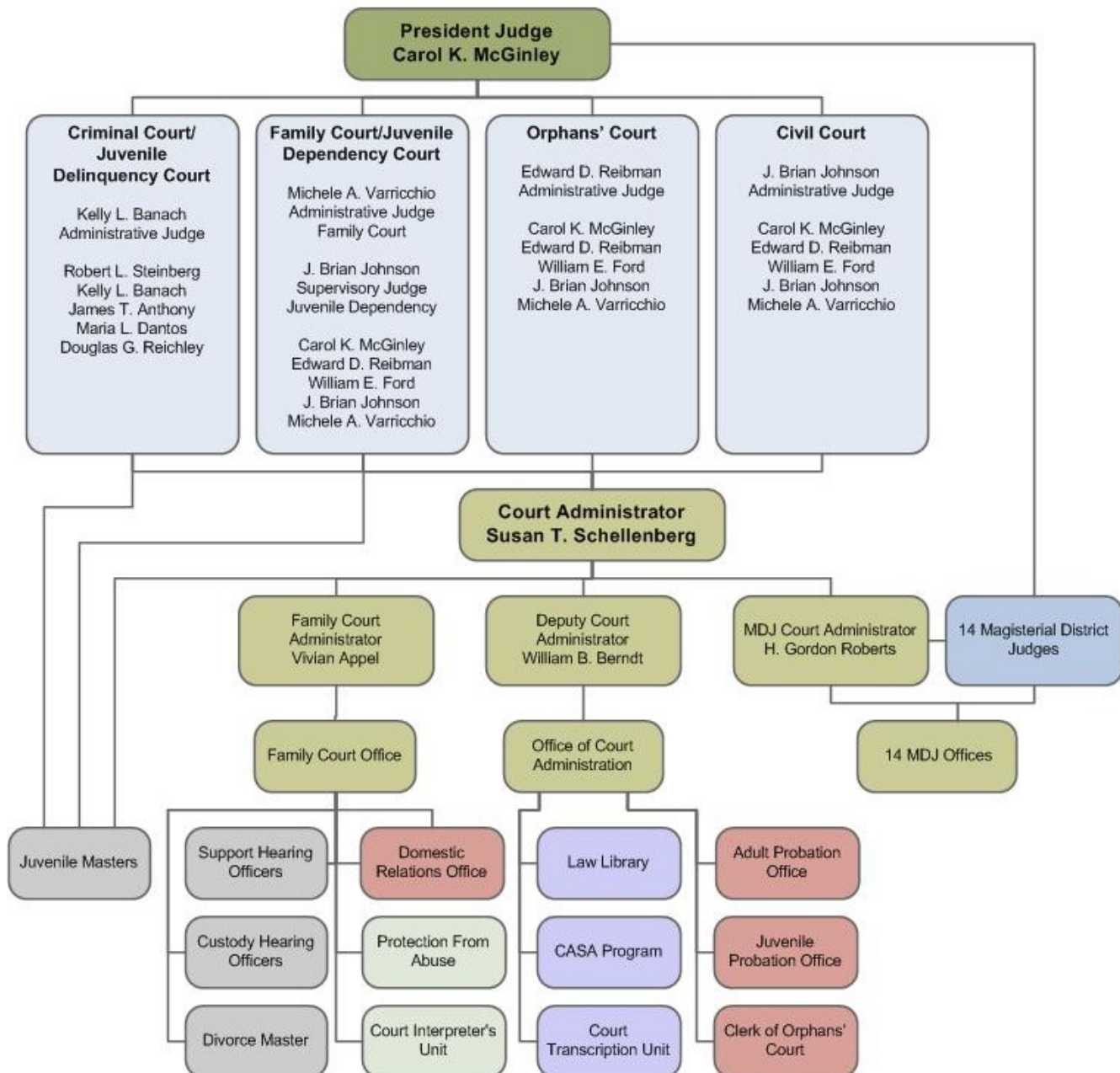
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2012 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

The Court of Common Pleas of Lehigh County, the 31st Judicial District of Pennsylvania, under the leadership of President Judge Carol K. McGinley, is staffed by ten judges.

In 2012, the Court was organized as follows:





MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT JUDGE

The Thirty-First Judicial District of Pennsylvania is pleased to provide the 2012 Annual Report. The year proved to be a year of significance, combining increased demands for service and budget constraints. While the court does not operate as a revenue generating agency, \$10,268,922 of county revenues can be attributed to actions of the court. This represents funding from outside sources, grants, fees, and costs and fines. Many of the grants are dependent on court agencies meeting performance standards imposed by the granting authorities, all of which standards our agencies met successfully. Additionally, \$2,344,623 was collected by the Clerk of Judicial Records for case filings.

The court continues to experience increased caseloads across the board. Not only are there more cases, but they are more difficult and complex, due to too many factors to describe here.

2012 saw the initiation of many additional mandates, most of which came into fruition in the latter part of the year, but will continue to affect all operations going forward.

The criminal division of the courts continued to address the prison population, in collaboration with all involved agencies, row offices and administration, making every effort to keep the prison population at the lowest possible level consistent with the need for public safety. The Criminal Justice Advisory Board continued to be another important interagency collaboration, especially in grant initiatives and data sharing among local agencies and other counties. All of these efforts lead to cost savings countywide, not just within the judiciary budget.

Late in the year, the Adult and Juvenile Probation Departments began the process of complying with the federal Adam Walsh Act, which required registration of all sex offenders, to include both past offenders and current probationers, a time consuming process.

There were significant juvenile delinquency rule changes during the year, such as changes in notification procedures, additional reviews for juveniles under supervision, and

the appointment of educational decision makers, to name a few. Juvenile Probation also began the implementation of new procedures in evidence-based practices which required training of the probation officers and aides.

In the civil courts, mortgage foreclosures continued to be filed at a high rate, and an influx of more than 400 assessment appeals were filed in court. The court developed programs which addressed the needs of Lehigh County litigants to have fair and prompt resolution of their issues. These programs will continue in 2013. It is anticipated that, due to the advance planning by the courts in collaboration with the Clerk of Judicial Records and Information Technology, that almost all the assessment appeals will be concluded by the end of 2013. This is a remarkable achievement. Additionally, the planning has led to the development of a pilot program to begin in 2013 for electronic filing of selected civil cases in preparation for eventual electronic filing implementation of all civil cases.

In 2005, the court was notified by the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement, after an audit, that the Domestic Relations office would be required to add 20 employees to properly serve constituent caseloads. Failure to meet required standards would jeopardize the reimbursement funding received by the county. Six personnel were eventually added to the Domestic Relations complement by 2009, although that total was reduced by two in 2011. Even so, under skillful management, the 2012 audit was passed successfully with no threat to any reimbursement. In fact, the standards were exceeded to the extent that an additional \$548,506 incentive funding was received.

The court also celebrated the many accomplishments of the Children's Roundtable in facilitating permanency initiatives in child dependency, which results in more permanent arrangements for at-risk children, and budget savings.

As further budget constraints appear to loom, the court will be challenged to continue the services we are mandated to provide to the community.

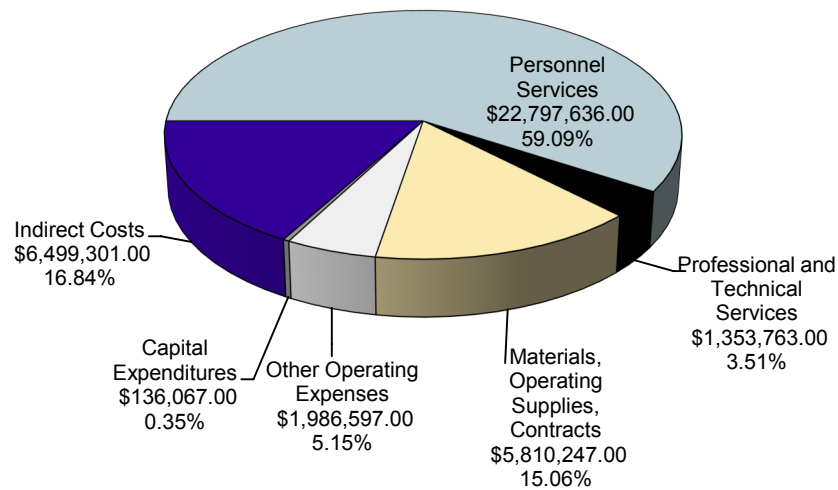
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carol K. McGinley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Carol" and last name "McGinley" clearly legible.

Carol K. McGinley, President Judge

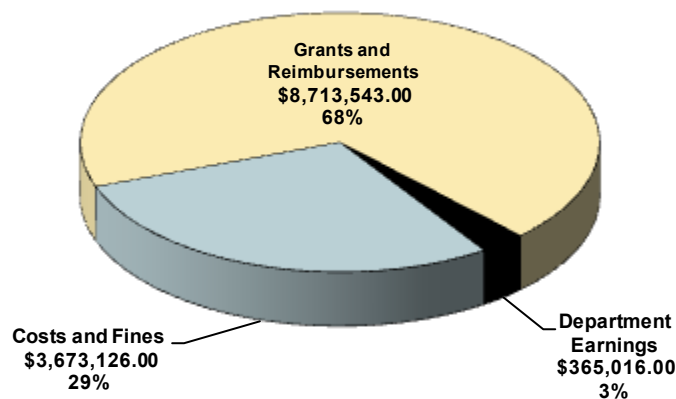
31ST JUDICIAL DISTRICT 2012 BUDGET

COURT REVENUE AND EXPENSES

2012 Court Expenses



2012 Court Revenue



GRANT FUNDING

The Court places emphasis in pursuing federal and state grants in order to offset the costs of current or new programs. This grant funding is more available in the areas of Adult and Juvenile Probation, with concentration on creation of new programs and initiatives.

Adult Probation receives state funding based on the amount of compliance with state-wide standards for probation operations. Currently the Lehigh County Adult Probation Department receives the maximum in state funding for compliance at over the 90% level.

The Juvenile Probation Department works closely with the Lehigh County Office of Children and Youth to produce a “needs-based” budget that attempts to maximize state assistance to the Court, in the form of services at state youth institutions and a funding stream to reimburse the court for some delinquent youth placement expenditures.

2012 CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD GRANT ACTIVITIES				
Project Title	Grant	Amount	Department	Status
TCAP	PCCD	\$617,078.00	Adult Probation	Awarded
Intermediate Punishment Program Enhancement	PCCD	\$23,780.00	SCA/Adult Probation	Awarded
Grant-In-Aid Continuing Program for the Improvement of Adult Probation Services	PBPP	\$636,608.00	Adult Probation	Awarded
Grant-In-Aid/Specialized Probation Services	JCJC	\$375,258.00	Juvenile Probation	Awarded
Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (Mental Health PO)	PCCD	\$32,000.00	Juvenile Probation	Awarded
Drug Testing Funding	JCJC	\$3,330.00	Juvenile Probation	Awarded
Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy	PCCD	\$29,304.00	Juvenile Probation	Awarded
Bulletproof Vest Partnership	US Department of Justice	\$2,966.79	Juvenile Probation	Awarded
Training Grant	JCJC	\$23,900.00	Juvenile Probation	Awarded

JUDGES OF THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF LEHIGH COUNTY

PRESIDENT JUDGE CAROL K. MCGINLEY

Carol K. McGinley is the President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, effective January 3, 2011. She has served on the court since January of 1986. Prior to her election, she practiced law for twelve years in the law firm now known as Gross McGinley, LLP. On the court, she has served in all divisions: civil, criminal, family and juvenile. She has also served as Administrative Judge of the criminal and juvenile divisions.

Judge McGinley is a graduate of Georgetown University Law Center. She is the recipient of the James Madison First Amendment Award from the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, Society of Professional Journalists (June 2000) and the Distinguished Leadership Award from the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (2005, 2006).

She is a past President of the Pennsylvania Conference of Trial Judges, having served on its Educational Committee for many years prior to her becoming an officer of the conference. 1993 to 1996, she was appointed Judge on the newly established Court of Judicial Discipline, which is the court responsible for the enforcement of judicial ethics.

By appointment of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, she sat as Chairman of the Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners from April 1990 to April 1992. The Board of Law Examiners is responsible for the admission of attorneys to practice law in Pennsylvania.

She was a member of the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission from 1991 to 2006, having been appointed in sequence by Governors Casey, Ridge and Rendell. She served as chairman of the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission from July 2000 to July 2005. From 2001 to 2009, she was appointed to the Supreme Court Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee as Vice Chairman. She also served as a member of the Children's Cabinet of Pennsylvania.

Judge McGinley is married and has three grown children.

JUDGE EDWARD D. REIBMAN

Judge Edward D. Reibman graduated from Lafayette College in 1969 and earned a J.D. from Duke University School of Law in 1972. He served in the U.S. Army Reserves from 1969 to 1975. He was the Law Clerk to Honorable Bryan Simpson, U.S. Court of Appeals, 11th Circuit (formerly 5th Circuit), 1972 to 1973, and a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice from 1973 to 1975. He served as a trustee of The Swain School and as President of Lehigh Valley Legal Services and Chairman of the Allentown Historical and Architectural Review Board. He currently serves as a member of the Executive Board of the Minsi Trails Council of the Boy Scouts of America. He has served on the Judicial Ethics Committee of the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges since 1994 and has been its chair since December 2009. He is a member of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's Ad Hoc Committee to Study the Code of Judicial Conduct. He was elected Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Lehigh County in November 1991, and retained in November 2001 and 2011. He is a member of the Lehigh County, Northampton County, Pennsylvania and Florida Bar Associations.

JUDGE WILLIAM E. FORD

Judge William E. Ford graduated with honors from DeSales University in 1972 and earned a J.D. from Dickinson School of Law in 1975. He served in the United States Marine Corps Reserve (JAG) from 1975 to 1979 and as an Assistant District Attorney for Lehigh County from 1979 to 1981 and 1983 to 1991. Judge Ford also was in private civil practice from 1981 to 1991. He was an adjunct member of the faculties of DeSales University and Chestnut Hill College. He was elected Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Lehigh County in November 1991, retained for a second ten-year term in November 2001, and retained for a third ten-year term in November 2011.

JUDGE ROBERT L. STEINBERG

Judge Robert L. Steinberg graduated from American University in 1973 and earned a J.D. from Western New England School of Law in 1976. Judge Steinberg served Lehigh County as an Assistant Public Defender from 1976 to 1978. He served in the District Attorney's Office as an Assistant from 1978 to 1983, as Deputy District Attorney from 1985 to 1988, and as First Assistant District Attorney from 1988 to 1991. He served as District Attorney for Lehigh County from 1991 to 1998. He is the recipient of a number of awards, including the Colonel John J. Schafer Award for excellence in law enforcement. He also has been a lecturer, a member of the faculty and an author of criminal law related articles for the Pennsylvania Bar Institute and other organizations. He was elected Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Lehigh County in November 1997, and retained for a ten-year term in 2007.

JUDGE J. BRIAN JOHNSON

Judge J. Brian Johnson graduated from Villanova University in 1977 and earned a J.D. from Temple University School of Law in 1981. He served Lehigh County as an Assistant Public Defender from 1981 to 1983, as Criminal Arraignment Master from 1984 to 1986, as Assistant County Solicitor from 1987 to 1989, and as Criminal Costs and Fines Master from 1990 to 1991. He taught Business Law at DeSales University 1986 to 1987. He was an associate with Lanshe, Lanshe and Lanshe from 1983 to 1986. He was in private practice as a sole practitioner and as a partner in the firms of Johnson & Ashcraft, and Johnson, Ashcraft & Giordano from 1986 to 1996. Immediately prior to his election, he was Special Counsel to the Philadelphia-based national law firm of Duane Morris LLP from 1996 to 2003.

Judge Johnson has been a member of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee since 2009. He has chaired the Lehigh County Children's Roundtable since 2006 and has served on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's Leadership and State Roundtables since 2007. He chaired the Guiding Principles and CPCMS Users Group Committees of the Pennsylvania Children's Roundtable Initiative. He has been a member of the Pennsylvania Bar Association since 1984, a member of the Bar Association of Lehigh County since 1982, a member of its Board of Directors 1999 to 2000 and a member of the Donald E. Wieand Inn of Court 2000 to 2001 and a Team Leader 2002 to 2003. He was elected Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Lehigh County in November 2003. He has served as the Administrative Judge of the Civil Division since 2007 and served as the Administrative Judge of the Orphans' Court Division from 2007 to 2010.

JUDGE KELLY L. BANACH

Judge Kelly L. Banach received her undergraduate degree in Government from Cornell University in 1979 and her law degree from Villanova University School of Law in 1982. She served as Assistant Public Defender in Bucks County, Pennsylvania from February 1983 to November 1985. After a brief association with the Allentown Law Firm of Wiener and Wiener, Judge Banach started at the Office of the Lehigh County District Attorney in May 1987. She ultimately became Senior Chief Deputy District Attorney, Supervisor of the Special Offenses Unit, which handled Sex Crimes, Child Abuse, and Domestic Violence cases, and Director of Training and Public Education, developing the Protecting Kids from Cyber Crimes Program. Judge Banach served as an instructor for the Allentown Police Academy and the Pennsylvania District Attorney's Institute. She is a former board member of the Child Advocacy Center of Lehigh County, and was co-chair of the Lehigh County Death Review Team. She was elected to the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas in November of 2003 and presently serves as the Administrative Judge of the Criminal and Juvenile Divisions.

JUDGE JAMES T. ANTHONY

Judge James T. Anthony graduated from Saint Joseph's University in 1980 and earned a J.D. from Creighton University School of Law in 1983. Commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps Reserve in 1981, he retired at the rank of Colonel in 2009. During his military career he served in both active duty and reserve capacities, including service in Okinawa in 1984-1985, and service in Iraq in 2004-2005 and 2006-2007. He served as a full time Assistant District Attorney in York County in 1987 and as a part time Assistant District Attorney in Lehigh County from 1989 to 1999. After employment as staff counsel for two insurance companies, Judge Anthony went into the private practice of law where he remained for nineteen years. Judge Anthony is a member of the Lehigh County and Pennsylvania Bar Associations. He was elected Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Lehigh County in November 2007.

JUDGE MARIA L. DANTOS

Judge Maria L. Dantos received her undergraduate degree from Rutgers University in 1982 and her law degree from Syracuse University College of Law in 1985. Judge Dantos served Lehigh County as a Public Defender from 1986 to 1989. She began her service in the District Attorney's Office as an Assistant in 1989. She served as Deputy District Attorney, Chief Deputy District Attorney, and in 2001 was appointed First Assistant District Attorney. She was the supervising attorney for the Lehigh County Investigating Grand Jury and the Homicide Task Force. She has been an instructor for the Allentown Police Academy, the Pennsylvania District Attorney's Association, and the Pennsylvania Bar Institute. She is the recipient of the Colonel John J. Schafer Award for excellence in law enforcement. She was appointed by the Governor to fill a vacancy on the bench in June of 2007 and was elected Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Lehigh County in November 2007 and serves in the Criminal Division.

JUDGE MICHELE A. VARRICCHIO

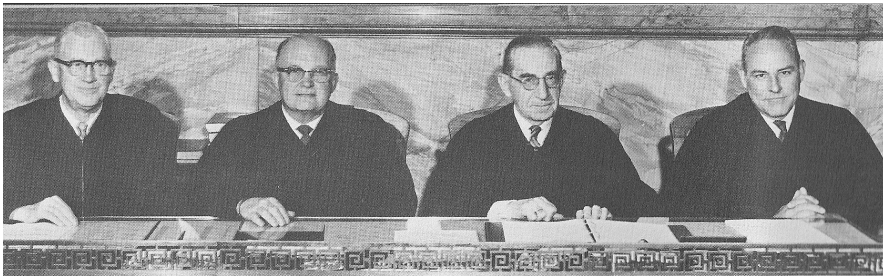
Judge Michele A. Varricchio, a graduate of William Allen High School, Class of 1977, earned a B.A. at St. John's College, Santa Fe, New Mexico, and a J.D. from Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C. She served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable James N. Diefenderfer from 1985-1987. She was Solicitor for the Lehigh County Domestic Relations Section from 1988-1992. From 1987 through 1992 she was in partnership with Frederick P. Rooney, Esq. She was appointed by Governor Casey in 1992, was elected in 1993, and served for fifteen years as a Magisterial District Judge in Lehigh County. Judge Varricchio was a member of the Special Court Judges Association from 1992-2007. In the past she has served as the President and Treasurer of the Allentown YWCA. She has been a member of the Allentown Rotary Club since 2003. She served on the boards for 4H, Bikeworks, and the Human Services Advisory Board, and the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival at DeSales University. She is a member of the Lehigh Valley Arts Council and the National Association of Women Judges and has served as a Board member of the Bar Association of Lehigh County since 2011. Judge Varricchio attended the National Judicial College, General Jurisdiction, Reno, Nevada, October 2009. She was elected Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Lehigh County in November 2007 and assigned to the Civil Division. She currently serves as the Administrative Judge of the Family Division.

JUDGE DOUGLAS G. REICHLEY

Judge Douglas G. Reichley graduated from Lafayette College in 1983 with honors in Government and Law, and received his J.D. from the Dickinson School of Law in 1986. Judge Reichley served in the Lehigh County District Attorney's Office from 1989-2000, rising to the position of Deputy District Attorney for violent crime prosecutions. He also served in the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office from 2000-2001 in the Special Investigations Unit. Before his election to the bench, Judge Reichley served in the Pennsylvania State House from 2003-2011. During his five terms in office, he was appointed to the House Appropriations Committee as the Vice-Chairman, and also served on the Consumer Affairs, Health and Human Services, Judiciary, Professional Licensure, Transportation, and Urban Affairs committees. He was the recipient of several recognitions for his legislative service, including being named the State Public Official of the Year by PA Bio in 2010 and the Outstanding Legislator of the Year in 2010 by the Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees.

SENIOR JUDGES

The Court was further staffed by Senior Judges Lawrence J. Brenner and Alan M. Black, and such other Senior Judges as assigned from time to time by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Senior Judges may work a limited number of days each year in order to assist the Court. The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania determines the number of days each Senior Judge may preside during a given month.



From the left: Common Pleas Judge Henry V. Scheirer, Common Pleas Judge Kenneth H. Koch, President Judge of Common Pleas Court James F. Henninger; President Judge of Orphans' Court Martin J. Coyne.

The Lehigh County Bench in 1962, the year of the Groundbreaking for the New Lehigh County Courthouse at 5th and Hamilton Streets. In 2012, ten judges and two senior judges served the Court of Common Pleas of Lehigh County.

"The administration of justice is the firmest pillar of government"
(George Washington, letter 1789)

The judicial body of Lehigh County—the Thirty-First Judicial District of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania—consists of four judges chosen by qualified electors of the county for a term of ten years. Administration and settlement of decedents' estates, trust estates and minors' estates comprise the key functions of the President Judge of the Orphans' Court. In addition, the Court may appoint guardians for estates of minors (this is a function which gave the Court its name), handle adoption cases and exercise jurisdiction over appeals from the Register of Wills in the probating of wills and appeals from inheritance tax appraisements. The Marriage License Bureau is operated under the jurisdiction of the Orphans' Court.

PENNSYLVANIA COURT HIERARCHY

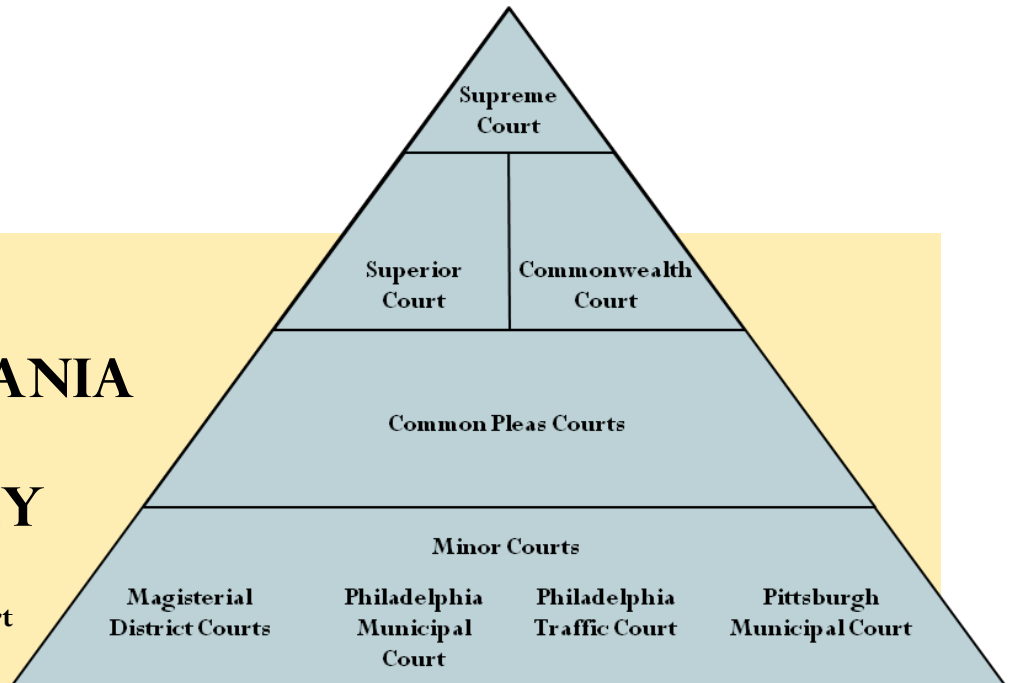
The Pennsylvania court system is structured like a pyramid. At its

base are the magisterial district judges and the Philadelphia Municipal and Traffic courts where cases involving small claims, minor crimes and traffic offenses are heard.

One step up on the pyramid are the Common Pleas courts, in 60 judicial districts around the state where trials are held in civil and criminal cases and disputes involving family and estate matters are litigated. As the 31st Judicial District of Pennsylvania, Lehigh County is one of the 60 Common Pleas courts, and also has 14 Magisterial District Judges.

Another step up are the intermediate appellate courts, the Superior Court, a general court of appeals with 15 judges, and the Commonwealth Court, a special court with nine judges which hears government-related matters.

At the top of the pyramid is the highest court, the Supreme Court with seven justices. The Supreme Court has the power to review any case from the lower courts. It also has administrative authority over the entire Pennsylvania court system. For more information about Pennsylvania's court system visit, <http://www.pacourts.us/learn>.



THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES OF THE COURT

COURT ADMINISTRATION

The responsibility of the Court Administrator is to manage the non-judicial functions of the Court under the guidance of the President Judge. Judges are ultimately responsible for effective court management. However, the complexity of the modern court requires the delegation of administrative functions and responsibilities to the Court Administrator. The Court Administrator serves as an appointee of the entire Court but is subject to the supervision and direction of the President Judge. The Court Administrator must practice extensive managerial and administrative skills to serve effectively as the managerial arm of the Court. The Court Administrator serves the dual function of increasing judges' time for adjudication by accomplishing the administrative functions of the Court, and by bringing professional managerial expertise to the administrative problems of the judiciary.

Duties of the Court Administrator include personnel and fiscal management, calendar or scheduling management, information systems and space and equipment management, records control, public information, and jury management.

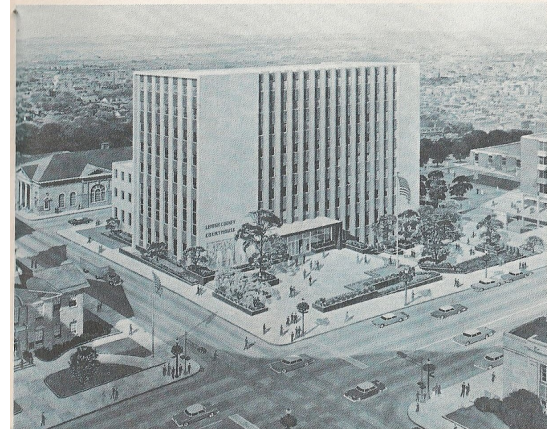
In 2012, the District Court Administrator, Susan T. Schellenberg, and the Deputy Court Administrator, William B. Berndt, were responsible for supervision of all court-related departments of the Judiciary, to include Adult Probation, Juvenile Probation, Domestic Relations, District Judge personnel, the Law Library, the Court Transcription Unit, and Court staff personnel.



The present courthouse at 5th and Hamilton Streets, Allentown—little changed from the early 1800's.

1962: Old Courthouse, above, and New, but not yet built, Courthouse below.

Artist's sketch of new courthouse, soon to rise on the north-east corner of 5th and Hamilton Streets, Allentown.



COURT TECHNOLOGY

The Court has been increasing the use of technology over the last few years. The use of scanning and electronically forwarding court documents is becoming routine. Adult and Juvenile Probation have added case management systems which allow probation officers and their supervisors to manage and access cases electronically.

In 2012, the Court implemented an electronic filing (e-filing) pilot program for civil case filings. The pilot program began with the filing of tax assessment appeals. Thereafter, the program expanded to include a select number of law firms as well as additional case types and subsequent filings. Once the e-filing system has been thoroughly tested with various case types and filings, the Court will dissolve the pilot program and make e-filing available for all civil cases.

COURT TRANSCRIPTION UNIT

The Court Transcription Unit, under the supervision of Supervisory Court Reporter Dolores M. Young, has the primary task of recording proceedings before judges or other fact finders appointed by the Court. This task also includes the transcription of those notes taken during proceedings when a transcript is requested. The fifteen employees in this unit use both stenography and audio recording to perform the assigned task. Members of the unit are assigned to specific judges for a period of one year. Those who are not assigned to a judge, serve in a pool. Pool members fill in for assigned reporters and monitors when needed and also provide support to senior and visiting judges. Since the adoption of this system, transcription backlogs have been substantially reduced and office morale and effectiveness have been improved.

JUDICIAL EMPLOYEES BY DEPARTMENT							
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
COURT ADMINISTRATION	85	87	86	85	84	83	83
ADULT PROBATION	49	49	51	51	51	50	50
JUVENILE PROBATION	40	40	40	40	38	49	49
SPECIAL PROBATION	11	11	11	11	11	0	0
ORPHANS COURT	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
DOMESTIC RELATIONS	62	62	64	64	62	62	62
DISTRICT JUDGES	53	53	53	53	53	51	51
LAW LIBRARY	3	3	3	3	3	1	1
TOTAL	309	311	314	313	308	302	302

JURY ADMINISTRATION

The Office of the Court Administrator is responsible for the effective management of the jury system. The jury system operation is supervised by Court Operations Officer, Gayle Fisher, who coordinates the process of random juror selection and determines the number of jury panels needed each day.



1962: JURORS WERE CHOSEN BY A SPIN OF THE WOODEN WHEEL.

2012: COMPUTERS ASSIST IN THE RANDOM SELECTION OF JURORS.

2012 Lehigh County Jury Utilization Report

Jurors Reporting	4347
Jurors Sent to Voir Dire	3089
Jurors Selected	819
Juror Selection Rate	26.5%

The reception and orientation of jurors, followed by selection and control of individual juries, is a process that requires continuing cooperation between the jury management staff and the courtroom staff. The emphasis is on making juries available to those judges who may require them and to keep available only those jurors necessary for the accomplishment of this task.

To this end, Lehigh County has adopted the “one day, one trial” method of selection to increase the efficiency of the jury system while making a minimal imposition on the lives of our residents. Citizens selected for jury duty will serve one day, or, if selected for a jury, will serve the duration of that trial.

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA)

WHAT IS CASA?

The **Lehigh County Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)** Program provides consistent, credible and trained volunteers who advocate for Lehigh County's abused and neglected children in juvenile dependency court in accordance with the PA Juvenile Act (Title 42 PA C. S. § 6301 et. seq.). These CASA volunteers serve as the "eyes and ears" of the Court and are appointed to the most complicated dependency cases.

CASA VOLUNTEERS

CASA volunteers are everyday citizens who are interested in the children of their community. They are 21 years of age or older and are selected through a rigorous application process, which includes three background checks. CASA volunteers must complete 40 hours of pre-service training and make a minimum of an eighteen-month commitment to the CASA program. These incredible CASA volunteers are supported by two staff members in the CASA office. These staff members are responsible for recruiting, training and supervising CASA volunteers. In 2012, the staff handled more than 100 inquiries about volunteering, screened 40 volunteer applicants and held two 40-hour trainings for 11 new volunteers.

CASA volunteers are generally appointed to only one case at a time. Having only one case allows a CASA volunteer to focus more time and attention on a case than a paid service provider with a large caseload. CASA volunteers meet with the children they work with approximately three hours each month. In addition they speak with everyone involved in the child's life, including parents, teachers, doctors, therapists and other service providers. In 2012, Lehigh County CASA had 55 active CASA volunteers who advocated for 106 abused and neglected children, making Lehigh County CASA the third largest CASA Program in the state.

PERMANENT HOMES

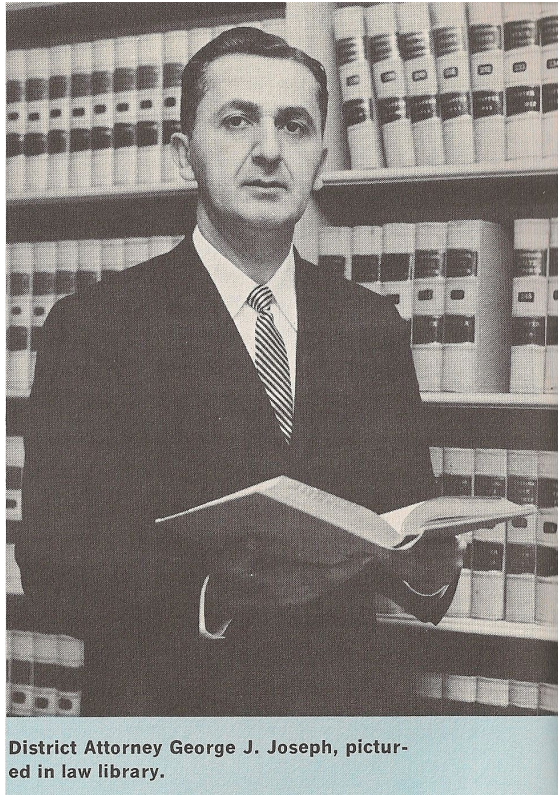
A CASA volunteer's main objective is to assist the Court in making sound decisions that will provide safe, secure and permanent homes for these at-risk children. CASA volunteers aid the court by submitting written reports making recommendations in the best interest of the child. A CASA representative attends every hearing for their children and is often called on for their input by the Judge or Master. With the help of CASA volunteers in Lehigh County, 25 children found permanent homes in 2012; 15 were adopted, 6 were reunited with their biological family and 4 were permanently placed with legal guardians.

CHILDREN'S BUREAU

The Lehigh County Children's Bureau was established in 1961 to provide a protective service for dependent, neglected and delinquent children. A director skilled in this specialized work appointed by the County Commissioners has the objective of keeping families together so that children do not become wards of the county. This endeavors to stop child neglect before it starts.

In 1962, Lehigh County had recently begun to provide protective services for dependent children.

Now, CASA volunteers continue the work to provide permanent homes and better solutions for children in Foster Care.



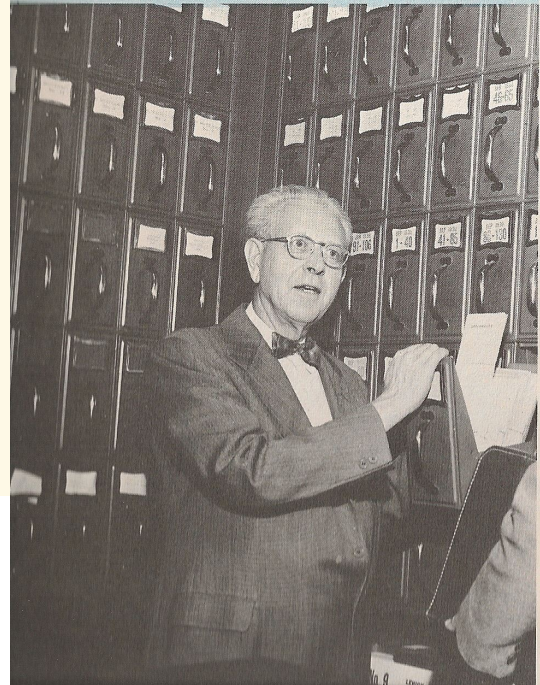
District Attorney George J. Joseph, pictured in law library.

1962: Print books were the one and only option for the law library of the District Attorney, Judges' Chambers books and the Lehigh County Law Library.

Paper documents created on typewriters or by hand were the only option for court filings, docket books, and court business records. Personal computers, electronic dockets, Lexis, Westlaw and the Internet did not exist.

2012: Digital resources have replaced many, but not all, print law books. Print law library collections are smaller and most modern legal research is done through services such as Westlaw and Lexis reached through the Internet. The Court still files actual paper copies of court documents, but tracks, dockets and stores information electronically. E-filing is on the horizon.

Clerk of Quarter Sessions Paul H. Hartman processes court papers.



LEHIGH COUNTY LAW LIBRARY

THE JUDGE DONALD E. WIEAND LAW LIBRARY

The Lehigh County Law Library was dedicated to the late Pennsylvania Superior Court and Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas Judge Donald E. Wieand in February of 1997. The Judge Donald E. Wieand Law Library is a county-funded public law library offering full library services to the public, the bar, county employees, and the court. In the absence of local law schools, the law library of the Thirty-First Judicial District stands alone in providing legal material in the county. Founded in 1869, the law library has been located in the Lehigh County Courthouse since 1963.

LIBRARY INFORMATION SERVICES

The management of the Lehigh County Law Library is overseen by law librarian Lorelei A. Broskey, M.L.S., Director of Library Information Services, under the direction of the District Court Administrator. As well as manning the public law library, the Library Information Services staff functions as the centralized purchasing and distribution office for all print and online legal resources procured for the Judges' chambers and for judicial and county offices. Book requisitioning, invoice processing, and book cataloging for more than 50 county and judicial offices are performed in the law library.

In 2012, the Library Information Services staff processed invoices and delivered print and online legal resources costing \$445,491.07 to the public law library, the judiciary, and county offices. The District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, the Clerk of Judicial Records and all other county offices are provided Westlaw through Law Library funded and administered Westlaw accounts.

In 2012, the full time law library employee dedicated to computer support for the court offices in the courthouse was moved from the budget of the Law Library to that of Court Administration. The employee's work area was moved from the Law Library lounge location to a self-contained office more appropriate for the position's primary responsibilities. However, in conjunction with other Library Information Services staff members, the computer support position is instrumental in providing document production and computer end user support for many of the offices within the courthouse as well as serving as the primary coordination contact for the Court's Website at www.lccpa.org. All document preparation for other offices and the court in general—such as this Annual Report—is considered to be the domain of the Document Prep Division of Library Information Services and is completed in consultation with the computer support employee through file sharing and continued collaboration.

LEHIGH COUNTY'S ONLY LAW LIBRARY

As the only public law library in Lehigh County, this important collection consists of traditional print, electronic and microform formats. This comprehensive library of Pennsylvania, national, and federal casebooks, selected statutes and regulations,

practice materials, treatises, and periodicals are supplemented by interlibrary loan with other institutions. The library offers online legal research through Westlaw, Shepard's Citations Online and Lexis. Through these services, the law library may supply virtually any legal resource to patrons. The six computers in the law library are also available for employees and patrons to access and use court rules and dockets, the Uniform Judicial System of Pennsylvania's website, public records of Lehigh County offices, the Lehigh County Court and Lehigh County websites, Microsoft Word, Elibrary, and many other resources.

Although Westlaw access for both the public workstations and the court employees is the method by which most primary law is now delivered, the law library remains a lending library. Since 2003, the book catalog records and patron library card records have been managed with LibraryWorld, a Windows based card catalog and circulation system. Catalog records are MARC format—the cataloging standard for libraries worldwide—and searching is now available by keyword, title, author and more. The online card catalog is available to the public on the computer workstations. Reference assistance continues to become more “virtual” with many questions asked and documents delivered by email to both employees and public law library patrons. Library staff members are on duty whenever the library is open.

Public Law Library Activity Totals for 2012	
Card Holding Members	375
Law Books Checked Out	1678
Law Books Renewed	1778
Photocopies Made by Public	2796
Paid Pages Printed from Computers	10220
In House Pages Printed	1244
Total Pages Printed from Computers	11464

SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANT ASSISTANCE

The Law Library serves as the primary point of access to the courts for many self-represented litigants and those with limited English language skills. The Self Help Section of the Court's Website, Spanish language translations of library pathfinders and Legal Referral brochures are among efforts to serve the growing number of law library patrons who are indigent, unrepresented, ESL speakers, or who simply lack basic information on how to access the courts.

In 2012, Spanish speaking staff members were added to the law library part time staff. Bilingual staff have proven a great aid in the assistance of Spanish speaking library users.

This 1962 era sketch of the planned new Lehigh County Courthouse appears to show a five-story building and courtyard quite different than the eight story edifice eventually built.



THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

CIVIL/FAMILY DIVISION

Currently, there are five judges assigned to the Civil/Family Division who are responsible for handling a caseload comprised of various types of civil actions as well as divorce, custody, protection from abuse, and child and spousal support cases. Furthermore, the judges in this division handle juvenile dependency cases and Orphans' Court cases regarding termination of parental rights, adoptions, and guardianships.

CIVIL ACTIONS

Civil actions are those cases which, for the most part, involve the resolution of private conflicts between people or institutions. These cases may include personal injury or personal property claims, matters of equity, products liability, malpractice, or commercial and contract disputes.

At the time a complaint is filed, a judge is assigned to the case using a computerized process that selects the next judge in the rotation. In addition, the Court utilizes an individual calendaring system, which means that the same judge handles all aspects of the case from its inception through completion.

In 2010, the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts changed the type of data that was to be collected and reported to the AOPC. As a result, the Court is now responsible for collecting data on all civil case filings, including civil actions classified as Civil Other. Within the Civil Other Category are License and Registration Suspension Appeals, Mortgage Foreclosures, Assessment Appeals, Quiet Title Actions, Zoning Appeals, Ejectment and Actions in Replevin. Consequently, in 2012, the Court recorded 2,570 new civil cases filed and 2,648 Civil Other actions filed.

The Civil Operations section of the Court Administrator's Office, under the direction of Court Operations Officer Linda Fritz and Court Operations Director Kerry Turtzo, is responsible for scheduling and tracking all civil cases. On average, there are approximately 1,100 civil cases pending in the Court's open inventory. With the pending cases, the staff of the Civil Operations section schedule and distribute notices for status conferences, arguments, hearings, settlement conferences, and trials. In addition, the staff is responsible for tracking the result of each court proceeding. Finally, the Judges of the Civil/Family Division work with the Civil Operations staff to proactively manage the civil caseload and resolve cases in a timely manner.

Annual Civil/Other Filings and Dispositions for 2012		
	Civil	Other
Pending Cases	1898	1853
Docketed Cases	2570	2648
Arbitration Appeals	50	7
Transferred In	26	1
Returned to Active	30	51
Default Judgments	769	892
Arbitration	273	91
Disposed of by motions	43	79
Settlements	768	292
Inactive	87	67
Transferred With-drawn	501	335
Administrative Purge	90	2
Other	263	242
Jury Trial	23	0
Non-Jury Trial	19	20
Total Disposed	2836	2020

MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE PROGRAM

In response to a faltering economy and an increase in mortgage foreclosure filings, the Court instituted, under the direction of the Honorable Edward D. Reibman, a Mortgage Foreclosure Program. This program is designed to assist individuals who are in danger of losing their homes through foreclosure. Mortgage foreclosure cases are scheduled for a conciliation conference before court-appointed Master Karl Friend. Individuals who wish to participate in the program are instructed to contact a housing counselor at the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley (CACLV) and to bring their financial materials to the conciliation conference. Along with the individuals who are in danger of losing their home, the housing counselor and a representative from the bank attend the conference. The goals of the program are to foster communication between the lender and the borrower and ultimately develop an agreement that avoids foreclosure.

In 2012, there were 1,553 new mortgage foreclosure cases filed. Of those 1,553 cases, 1,400 were diverted into the Mortgage Foreclosure Program. As a result of conciliation conferences held, 161 cases settled with the mortgage company. Finally, of the cases that were filed in 2012, 272 were pending at the end of the year.

CIVIL ARBITRATION PROGRAM

The Arbitration Program is utilized to adjudicate those civil cases which involve an amount with a monetary total of \$50,000 or less. A panel of arbitrators, consisting of three attorneys, is appointed by the Court to conduct a hearing and rule on each arbitration case. Either party, if not satisfied with the panel's ruling, may appeal the decision to the Court of Common Pleas. Once again, in 2012, the Arbitration Program proved to be a very effective method of alternative dispute resolution.

CRIMINAL/JUVENILE DIVISION

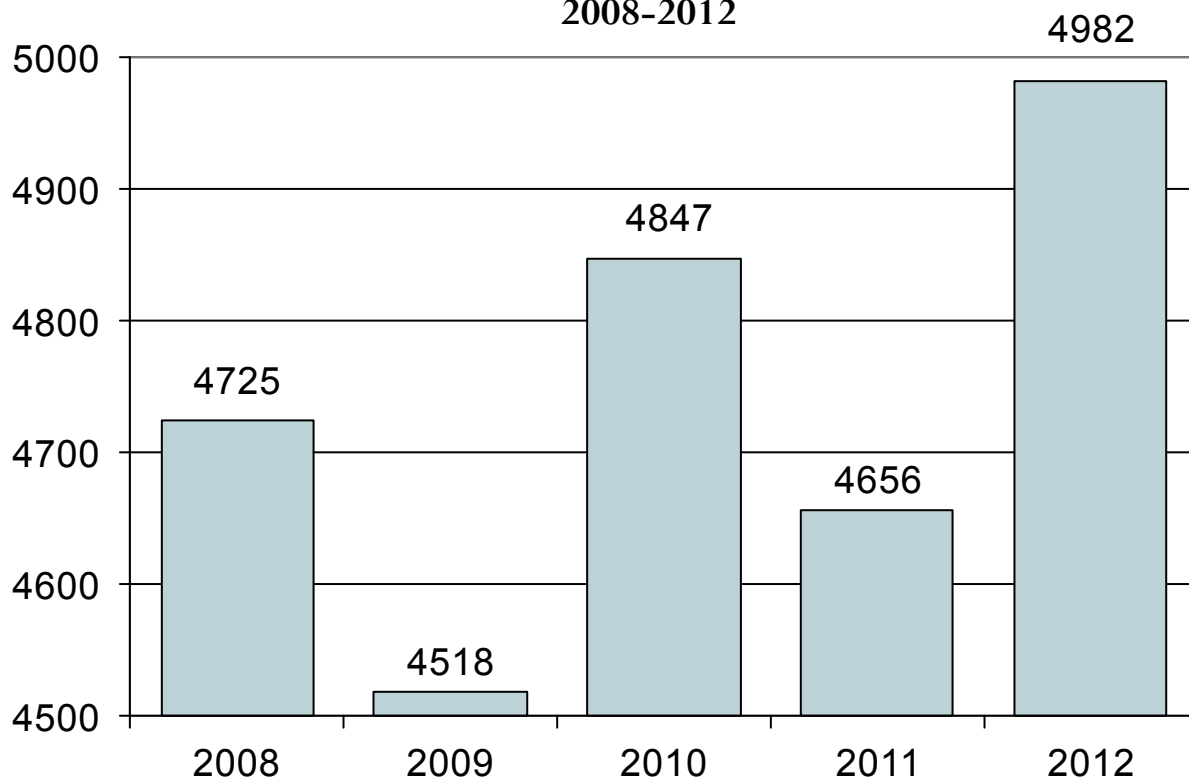
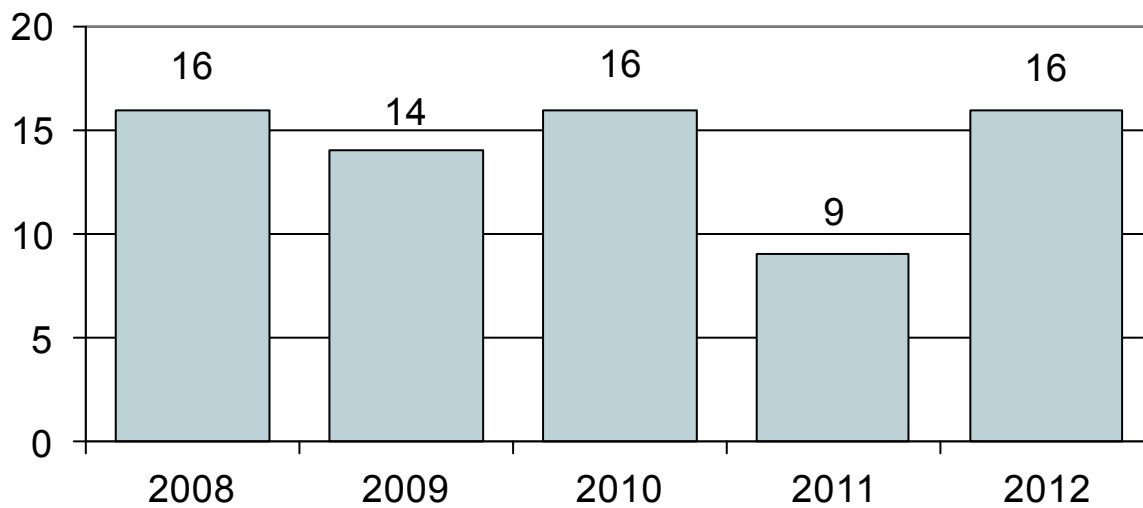
Currently, there are five judges assigned to the Criminal/Juvenile Division who are responsible for handling a caseload comprised of adult criminal cases as well as juvenile delinquency matters. Furthermore, the judges in this division handle appeals of summary cases, forfeiture matters, contempt of Domestic Relations' court orders, and contempt of cost and fine orders.

ADULT CRIMINAL COURT

In 2012, the Court received 4,982 new adult criminal cases – the highest number of criminal cases ever filed. Furthermore, 16 of the new adult cases were homicide filings. The homicide cases were divided and assigned to the five judges. The Court utilizes an individual calendaring system in the Criminal/Juvenile Division as well. Therefore, the assigned judge handles the cases from formal arraignment through disposition. In addition, all probation and parole violations as well as post sentence motions are handled by the judge who sentenced the defendant. Finally, in 2012, the five judges of the Criminal/Juvenile Division disposed of 5,904 adult criminal cases.

In 2012, the Court, court-related departments and the Department of Corrections continued to see positive results from the implementation of the community corrections program developed by the Criminal Justice Advisory Board's Reentry Committee. The number of technical probation violations was reduced significantly, which freed up prison bed space and reduced the number of probation violations that required scheduling before the Court.

CRIMINAL FILINGS AND DISPOSITIONS FOR 2012	
New Cases	4982
Reopened Cases	626
ARD	1770
Dismissed	5
Rule 586	65
Withdrawn Nolle Prossed	73
Speedy Trial	0
Guilty Plea	2901
Nolo Plea	139
Nonjury Trial-Guilty	10
Nonjury Trial Not Guilty	7
Jury Trial Guilty	29
Jury Trial Not Guilty	6
Bench Warrant	591
Incompetent	3
Case Transferred	4
Remand MDJ	6
Transfer Juvenile Court	1
Total Dispositions	5904

Criminal New Cases**2008-2012****Annual Homicide Filings****2008-2012**

Approximately 14% of male inmates and 39% of female inmates have a self-reported history of psychiatric issues and require psychotropic medications. Through the efforts of our CJAB's Mental Illness/Substance Abuse Committee, procedures have been implemented to identify these individuals early in the process so that they can receive appropriate treatment. Team MISA, a collaborative team comprised of representatives from the Department of Corrections, Pre-trial Services, MH/MR, Drug and Alcohol, Adult Probation, the District Attorney and the Public Defender develop treatment plans for those defendants who have serious mental health issues. Their efforts have resulted in significantly shorter prison stays for this challenging population.

JUVENILE COURT

Juvenile Court, in 2012, fell under both the authority of the Administrative Judge of the Criminal/Juvenile Division and the Administrative Judge of the Civil Division.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY CASE FILINGS AND DISPOSITIONS FOR 2012	
New Cases	961
Judge	217
Non-Judicial Officer	595
Other	195
Cases Processed	1007

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND JUVENILE DEPENDENCY

The Juvenile Court Division as a whole is responsible for cases involving juvenile delinquency and juvenile dependency.

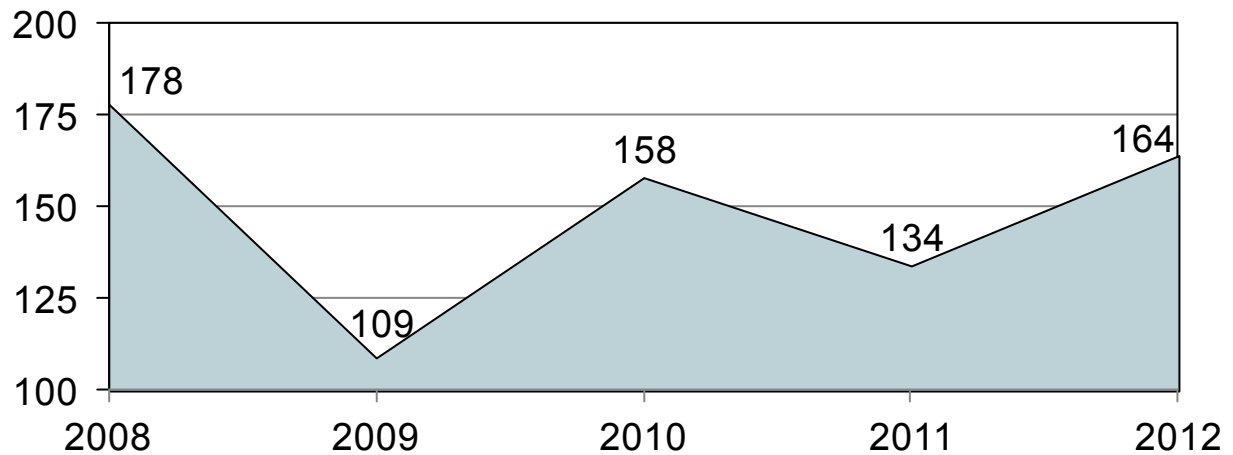
Delinquent juveniles are those under the age of 18 who are in violation of criminal law. Delinquency cases referred to a judge are handled by the Criminal/Juvenile Division. These juveniles may be referred to the Juvenile Probation Department.

Dependent juveniles are children who are, or who have been, subject to abuse or neglect. Action before the court is initiated by the Lehigh County Office of Children and Youth Services or the Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department. Dependency cases referred to a judge are handled by the Civil/Family Division. Dependent juveniles may enter the foster care system, be reunited with family or placed for adoption.

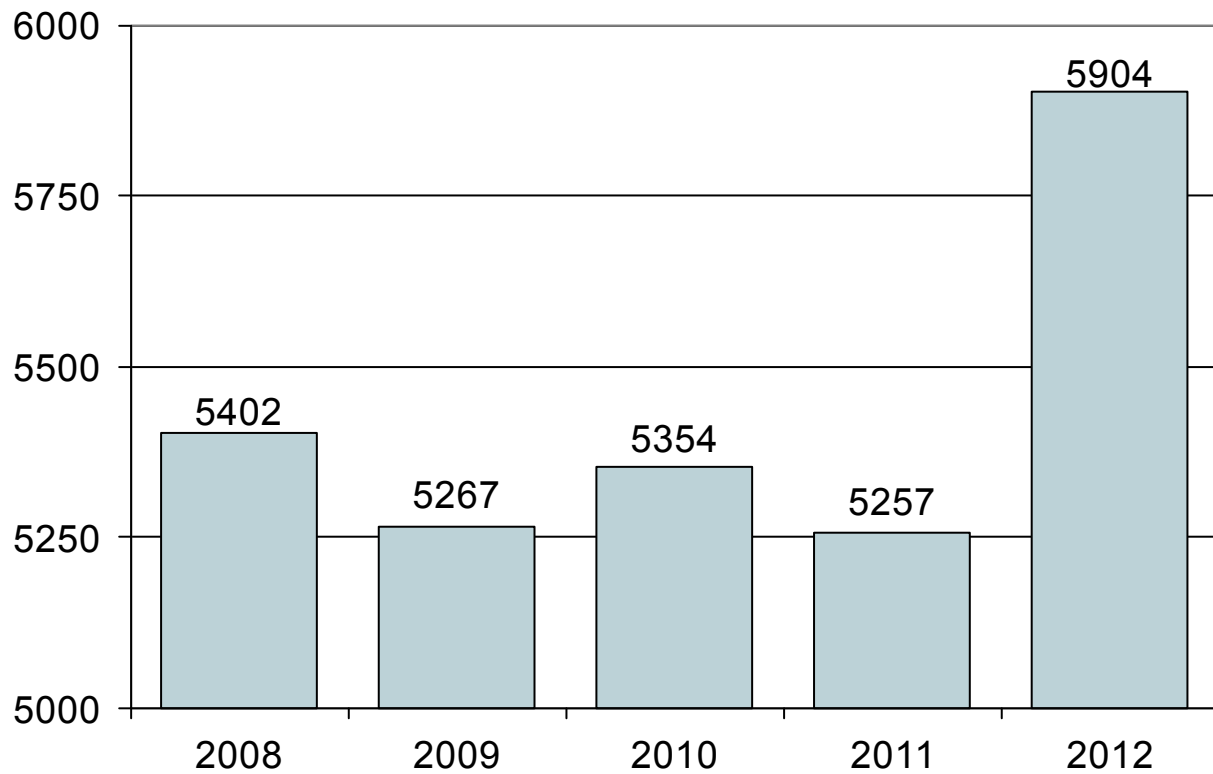
JUVENILE MASTERS

The Juvenile Court judges are assisted by one part-time and two full-time Juvenile Masters who adjudicate both delinquency and dependency cases. Theresa M. Loder, Esquire and Jacquelyn C. Paradis, Esquire serve as full time Juvenile Masters and Stephen A. Lanshe, Esquire serves as a part-time Juvenile Master.

Juvenile Dependency Cases Processed 2008-2012



Criminal Total Dispositions 2008-2012



JUVENILE COURT

“Respect the child.” (EMERSON)

The Juvenile Court, a branch of the Criminal Courts, has jurisdiction over children up to age 18. This includes delinquents (the largest group), dependent and neglected children.

Dependent and neglected children are usually committed to foster homes and supervised by children’s welfare agencies. Delinquent children are committed to their own homes on probation, or, when necessary to institutions. Justices of the Peace and aldermen do not have jurisdiction over juvenile offenders and, consequently, the matter is heard by the Court of Quarter Sessions only upon petition of a responsible person.

Juvenile Court proceedings are informal—with Judge, parents, children and others actively interested in the case present for discussion in private. The general public is not admitted. Traditionally, the Juvenile Court also supervises all females placed on probation or parole.

In 1962, the Juvenile Court functioned much the same as today’s Juvenile Court.

However, today, offenders are not grouped by gender, and all adult females are supervised by Adult Probation.

FAMILY COURT DIVISION

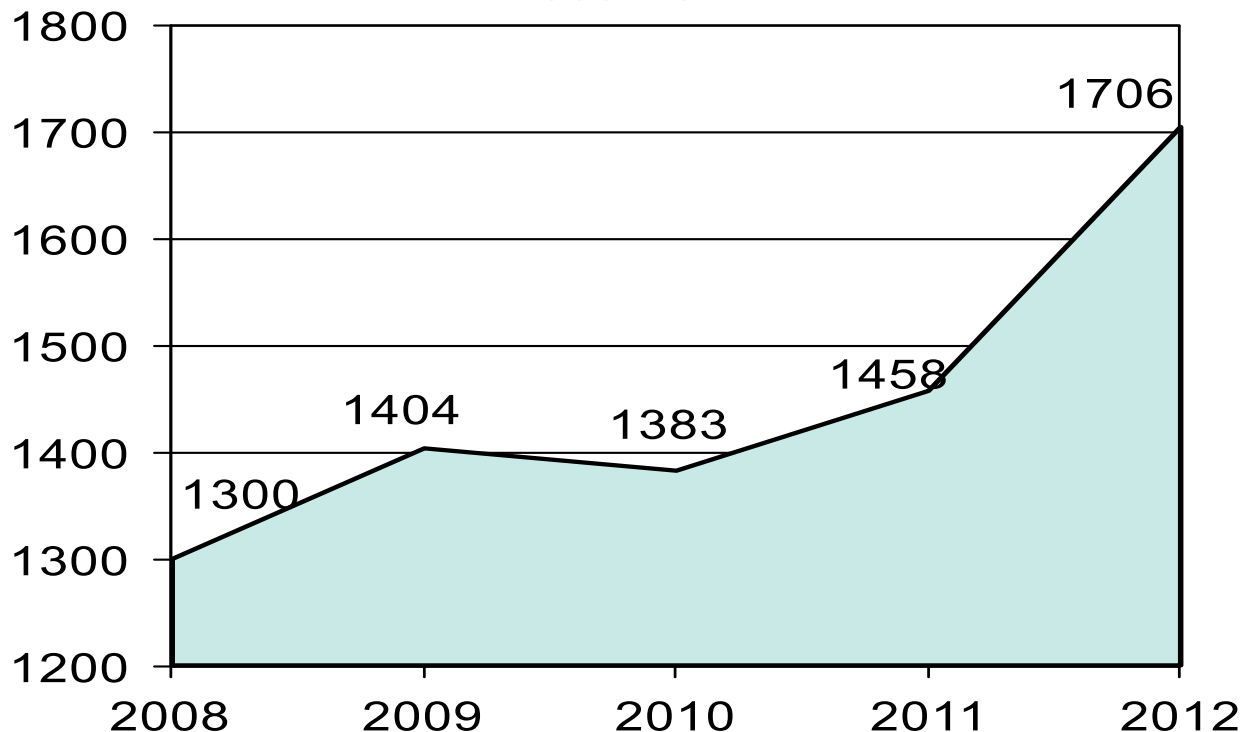
Legal actions ending family relationships, child custody, divorce, and protection from abuse (domestic violence), are managed by the Family Court Division. Child and spousal support are managed by the Domestic Relations Division, which, while part of the Family Court Division, has separate operations and a separate location.

The Family Court Office staff provides intake services for individuals seeking protection from abuse orders, as well as forms and filing instructions for people without an attorney who want to start a custody case. Divorce clients are referred to the Court's Self-Help website. Because of the nature of the cases, the office is equipped with private intake areas, conference rooms, hearing rooms, and sheriff's security.

CHILD CUSTODY

All custody cases start with a mediation or conciliation conference where efforts are made to create agreements between the parties. If a party requests mediation, a court mediator assists the parties in identifying and resolving the issues. All other cases are scheduled with a custody

**Custody Filings
2008-2012**



hearing officer for a settlement (conciliation) conference.

In 2012, more than 80 percent of child custody cases in Lehigh County involved people who appear without attorneys (self-represented). Court staff cannot provide legal advice, but the staff can provide filing information. Family Court has created “Frequently Asked Questions” with standardized accurate information which is available on the Family Court website and in person.

When a self-represented litigant comes to the Family Court office, an intake worker asks questions to determine if Lehigh County court has jurisdiction to decide a case. In general, the county in which the child has resided for six months is the court where a case starts. In some circumstances, the court can accept emergency jurisdiction. The intake worker provides the forms necessary to start a custody action, and gives instructions on completing the forms, and filing and serving the pleadings on the other parent. If the case involves a modification or contempt, the litigant must provide a copy of the existing court order.

While most cases are disputes between a mother and a father, some involve grandparents seeking custody or partial custody. In the past, custody cases typically involved divorcing parents. Consistent with national trends, more cases are now between “never marrieds.”

The conciliation conference may be the first opportunity since separating that the parties have met to discuss their child or children. It is an informal proceeding with a custody hearing officer in which the parties, and if represented, their attorneys, have the opportunity to present their case, and make their requests for legal and physical custody. The hearing officer helps the parties focus on the child’s needs, and attempts to settle the case. More than half the custody cases filed in 2012 were resolved by the hearing officers with agreed orders. An additional 20 percent of the cases were resolved with agreements through mediation or record hearings by a hearing officer.

When the parties fail to agree, the case is scheduled for hearing or trial. The Hearing Officer has the authority to receive testimony and make recommendations in partial custody cases. Cases involving legal custody, primary physical custody, or contempt of a court order are scheduled before a judge.

DIVORCE

The Family Court website provides detailed forms and instructions for the filing of simple, uncontested divorces. In 2012, 182 cases were initiated from the self-help website. Cases where parties require division of marital assets are heard by the Divorce Master. The Master holds settlement conferences and conducts hearings in contested cases on economic issues relating to the dissolution of

Divorce Case Filings and Dispositions for 2012	
New Cases	913
Contested Judge	0
Contested Master	151
Uncontested	736
Other	211
Cases Processed	1098

the marriage.

In 2012, the divorce master was assigned 151 cases. Most cases require multiple settlement conferences. Fewer than five percent of the cases require hearings.

PROTECTION FROM ABUSE

Pennsylvania law requires every court to assist victims of domestic violence seeking protection from abuse orders. In Lehigh County, the staff provides private intake assistance and twice daily escorts applicants to court. Special security measures are taken in all cases, but especially in cases where cross-petitions have been filed.

Individuals may seek a protection order on their own behalf or on behalf of their minor child. Court assistance hours are from 8 a.m. until 12:15 daily, and litigants appear before a judge at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. At other times, PFA relief is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through the magisterial district judges.

KIDS WAIT

Books, crayons, a sofa and bean bag chairs are not found in most courthouses, but they are found in Kids Wait, a waiting room for children and their parents. Located on the 4th floor next to the canteen, Kids Wait is a cooperative project of Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas, Lehigh County Office of Children and Youth Services, the Child Advocacy Center of Lehigh County and the Bar Association of Lehigh County.

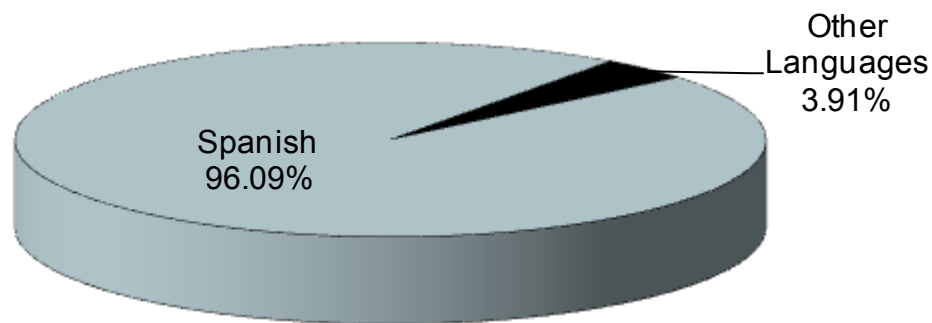
Children come to court to testify in child custody, juvenile dependency, criminal and domestic violence hearings. In the past, they waited in hallways on chairs or benches, sitting quietly. Kids Wait provides a safe and friendly, and comfortable environment for children to wait with a parent or guardian. Kids Wait is not a day care or drop-off center.

PFA Case Filings & Dispositions For 2012	
Beginning Pending	84
New Cases	1378
Cases Available	1462
Temporary Order Denied	146
Temporary Order Dismissed	166
Final Order Denied	70
Final Order Granted	445
Failure of Plaintiff to Appear	203
Final Order Stipulation	115
Petition Withdrawn	211
Transferred/Other	0
Deceased Party	0
Other	5
Cases Processed	1361
Ending Pending	101

INTERPRETING UNIT

The Court provides interpreters in criminal and family court proceedings. A staff 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 2012, but the number of available interpreters did not. The challenge of allocating limited resources to increased demands was met by having Juvenile and Adult Probation Offices and District Courts use the telephone interpreting services.



Spanish in Comparison with Other Languages

Assignments per Language per Month

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total
Amharic												1	1
Arabic	3	1	8	4	4	2		4	4	6	8	3	47
Bengali				1									1
Bulgarian				1									1
Burmese												1	2
Chinese Fuzhou													1
Chinese Mandarin		1	2			1	1	1			1	1	8
French							1						1
German								1					1
Gujarati										1	1	1	3
Hindi				1		1							2
Italian													1
Serbian				1									1
Sign Language		3	2	2	1	1	1			3	4	1	18
Spanish	252	194	245	218	221	234	181	237	227	281	231	157	2678
Vietnamese	1	1	5	3	1	2	1		3	2	1	1	21
Total	256	200	262	231	227	242	186	244	234	294	245	166	2787

**THERE ARE 12,573 ACTIVE SUPPORT
CASES IN LEHIGH COUNTY.
IN 2012, \$48,734,501 WAS COLLECTED AND
DISTRIBUTED BY THE
DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION.**

DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION

The Lehigh County Domestic Relations Section, located at 14 North 6th Street, Allentown, is the Title IV-D agency responsible for the establishment and enforcement of child and spousal support for the Lehigh County Courts. The office is responsible for establishing paternity for children born out of wedlock; locating absent parents for support purposes; and securing financial support for minor children of separated parents.

Under the leadership of Director Julia Parker Greenwood, the Domestic Relations Section, which consists of 21 conference officers, 10 managers, and 43 full and part-time support staff, handles all aspects of a support case, with the goal of establishing enforceable orders of support to benefit the children for whom support is owed.

ESTABLISHING AND ENFORCING CHILD AND SPOUSAL SUPPORT ORDERS

Once an application for support is filed, a conference is held with a conference officer to gather information and attempt to reach an agreed support order. If no agreement can be reached, a temporary order is issued and the case scheduled for a de novo hearing before a support hearing officer. The support order proposed by the hearing officer can be appealed before a judge.

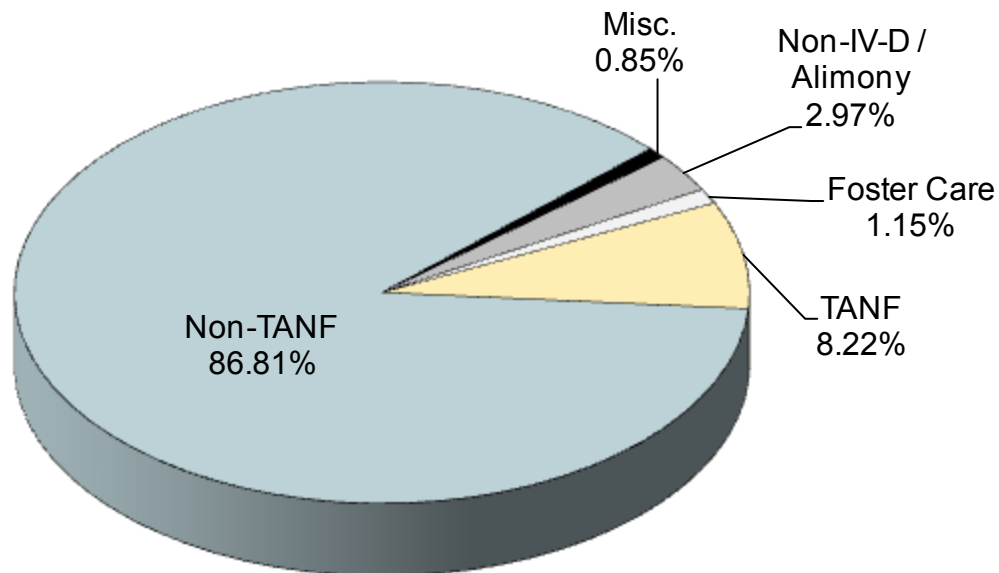
Conference Officers are also responsible for ensuring compliance with the support orders by holding contempt conferences to get payments back on track and by referring cases for a contempt hearing before a judge for failure to meet the support obligations.

CASE MANAGEMENT CASELOADS

Domestic Relations Officers and Clerical Staff are assigned to case management teams that are 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 2012, Domestic Relations staff conducted 5,286 establishment conferences and 659 establishment hearings. In addition, 3,861 judicial contempt hearings were conducted.

2012 Non-TANF Support Case Filings & Dispositions	
New Cases	5604
Cases Transferred In	104
TANF to Non-TANF	243
Judge	77
Hearing Officer	424
Conference Officer	5128
Cases Transferred Out	101
Non-TANF to TANF	404
Cases Processed	6134

2012 TANF Support Case Filings & Dispositions	
New Cases	407
Cases Transferred In	36
Non-TANF to TANF	404
Judge	3
Hearing Officer	22
Conference Officer	586
Cases Transferred Out	22
TANF to Non-TANF	243
Cases Processed	876



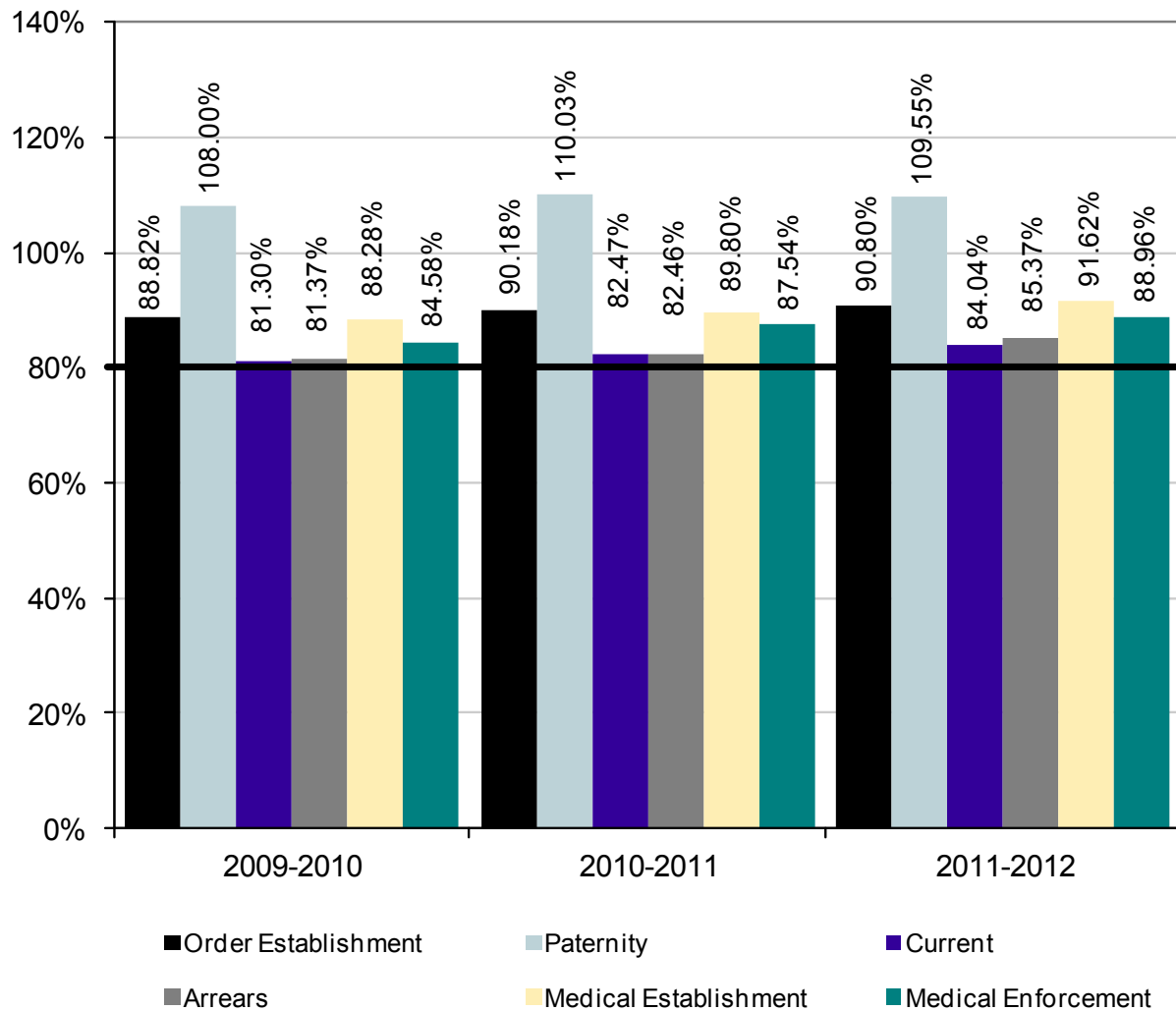
2012 Support Cases By Case Type

TANF Cases involve children in families receiving aid under the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program.

Non-TANF cases are those with no such federal assistance.

2011-2012 Domestic Relations Section Federal Performance Indicators

For Federal Fiscal year 2012, which ended on September 30, 2012, Lehigh County exceeded 80% in all the Federal Performance Standards.



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 2011, the total amount collected and then disbursed to the plaintiffs was \$48,625,033. In 2012, that figure was \$48,734,501, an increase of \$109,468 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 outlined 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 is performing as required, 66% of DRS operating expenses are reimbursed by the federal government.

In addition, as a IV-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
- Cases with a payment on arrears (back support) during the federal fiscal year
- Cases with medical support established—not tied to funding in 2012
- Cases with medical support enforced—not tied to funding in 2012

2012 ORPHANS' COURT HIGHLIGHTS

- Issued 2,181 marriage licenses.
- Audited, confirmed and adjudicated 44 fiduciary accountings.
- Freed 48 children for adoption following the termination of the parental rights of their biological parents.
- Granted 70 adoptions.
- Appointed guardians of the person for 19 minors.
- Adjudicated 104 persons incapacitated and appointed guardians for their persons and/or estates.
- Held 11 judicial bypass hearings pursuant to the Abortion Control Act.
- Approved 69 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 over time as 2011 amendments to the Adoption Act expanded the classes of person who can initiate an adoption search.

ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION

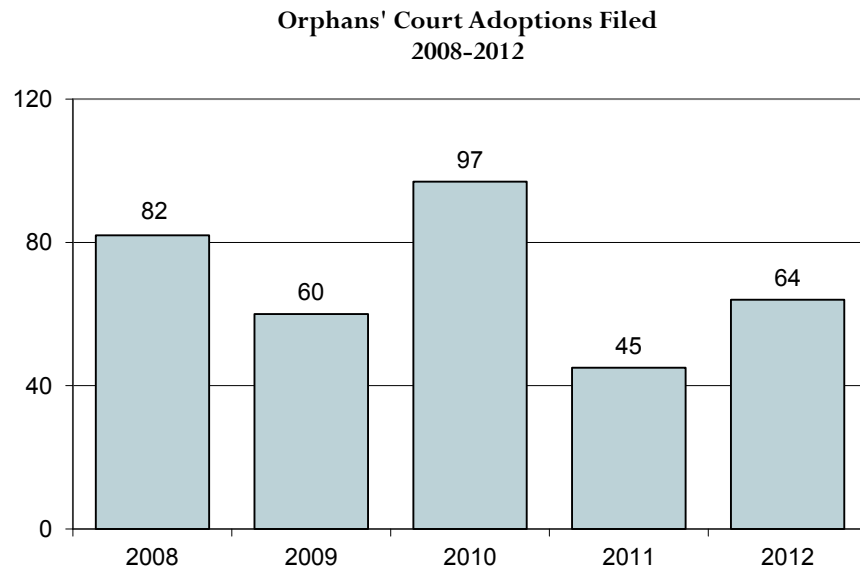
The name Orphans' Court is an anachronism derived from an era in which those persons who traditionally had no legal "voice" (minor children, widows, orphans, decedents) required an objective entity—the Orphans' Court—to "speak" for them and assure that their rights and interests were protected. Unlike 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. Wofffindin, 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 by-pass hearings required by the Abortion Control Act, and responds to all requests for access to both identifying and non-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 cannot 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 Judicial Bypass Hearings.

PROBATION AND PAROLE

The Chief Probation Officer is an agent of the Court of Common Pleas, appointed by the Judges and responsible to them. His duties comprise three main categories: 1) probation and parole activities; 2) domestic relations work and 3) juvenile work. This office supervises the collection of court orders for fines, costs, restitution, support and maintenance.

Regarding probation parole, he exercises supervision over male adults given suspended sentences or placed on parole after serving part of a sentence.

In Domestic Relations he enforces the non-support orders of the Court, which involves support for family members. Whenever possible, this officer endeavors to bring about a friendly settlement of domestic relations problems without recourse to the Court.

The Probation Officer also conducts pre-sentence investigations at the request of the Court of Common Pleas.

In 1962, Probation and Parole included what are today three separated entities, Adult Probation, Juvenile Probation and the Domestic Relations Section.

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.

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.

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, 2012, there were 6,119 offenders on active supervision with the Department, an increase of 6.6% 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, and making recommendations to the Court relative to an offender's sentence. In 2012, 597 pre-sentence investigations were completed, down 2.9 % over 2011.

2012 Adult Probation: Client Profile

- Sex

– Male	74.5%
– Female	25.5%

- Race

– White	57.2%
– Black	16.9%
– Latino	23.6%
– Other	2.3%

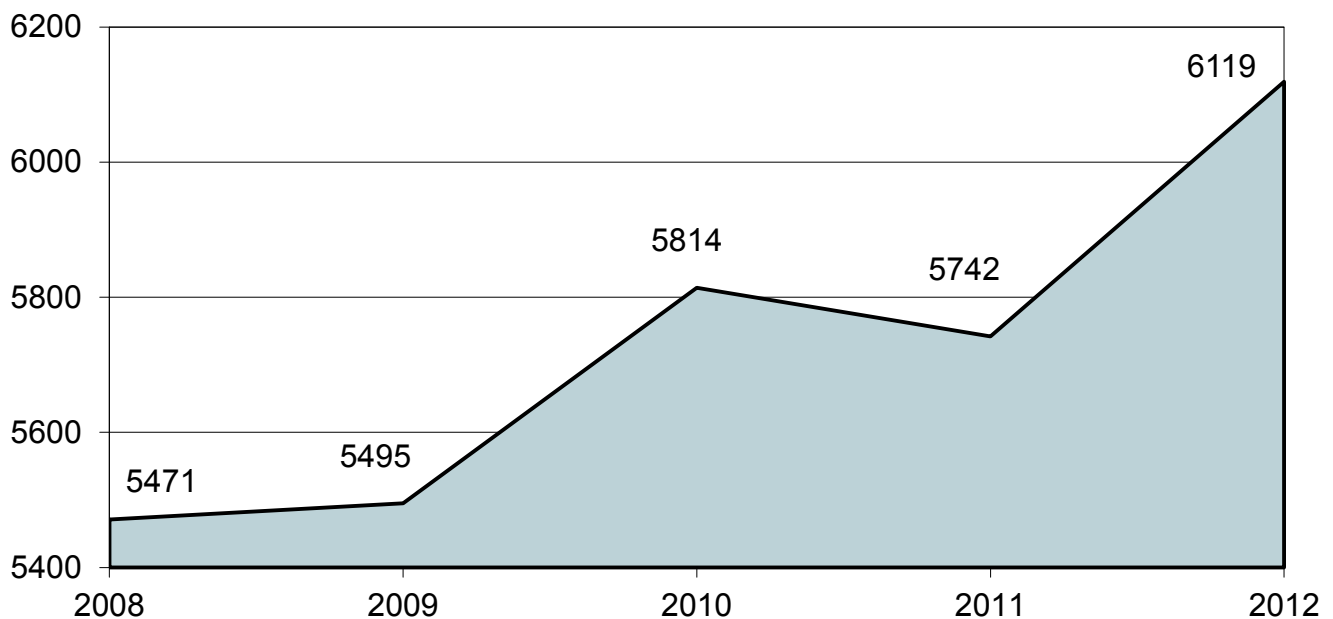
- Offense Type

– Felony	23.1%
– Misdemeanor	73.7%
– Other	3.1%

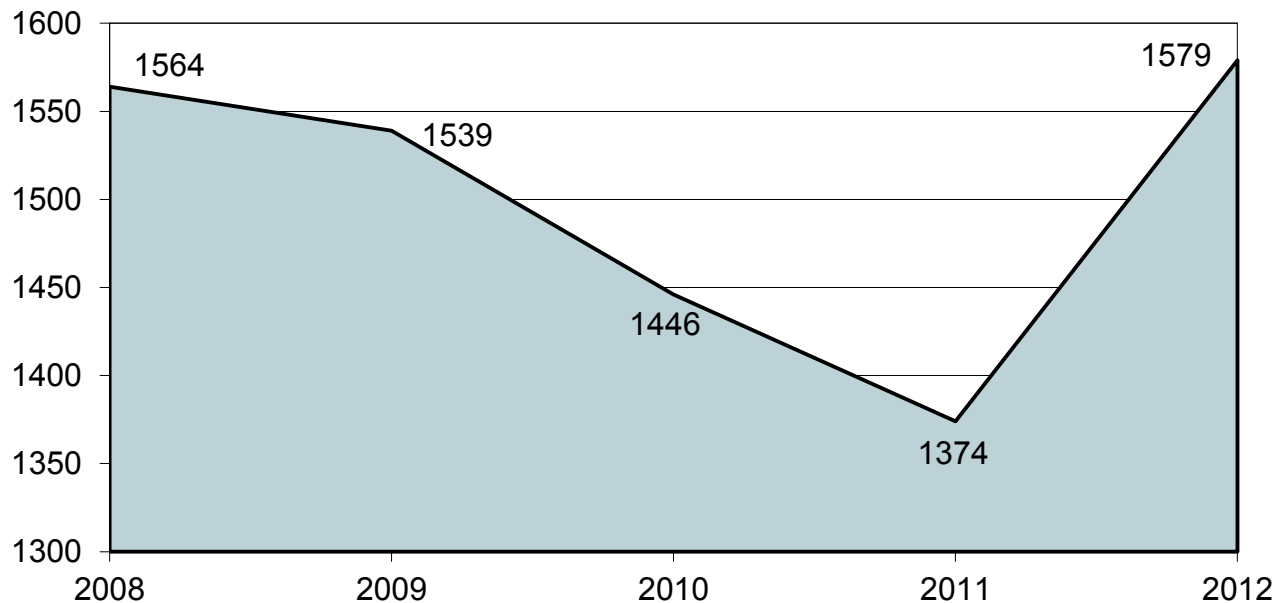
- Disposition

– Probation	41.7%
– Parole	30.3%
– ARD	24.6%
– I.P.	3.4%

Supervision Trends (# offenders) 2008-2012



Pre-Parole Trends 2008-2012



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 2012, 1579 parole plans were investigated, an increase of 11.3% over 2011.

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.

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. In 2012, 1165 offenders attended AHSDS, an increase of 16.3% over 2011.

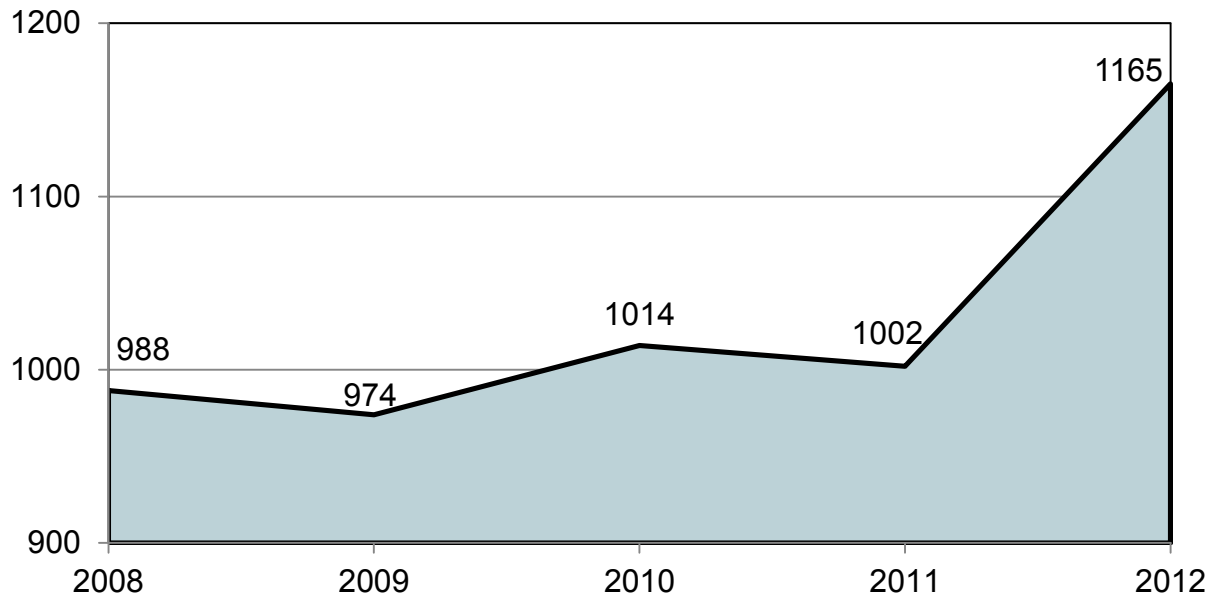
The Interlock Ignition Program involves the installation of a device on the vehicle, where detection of alcohol prohibits the vehicle from starting. Interlock is a main component of the DUI Repeat Offender Project, in which the department provides early and increased levels of treatment, education, supervision 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 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. In addition, valuable court time is saved by the administrative movement of offenders directly from the Adult Probation Department to the Community Corrections Center, as are bed days charged to the Department of Corrections. In 2012, 223 alleged technical violators were referred to the project.

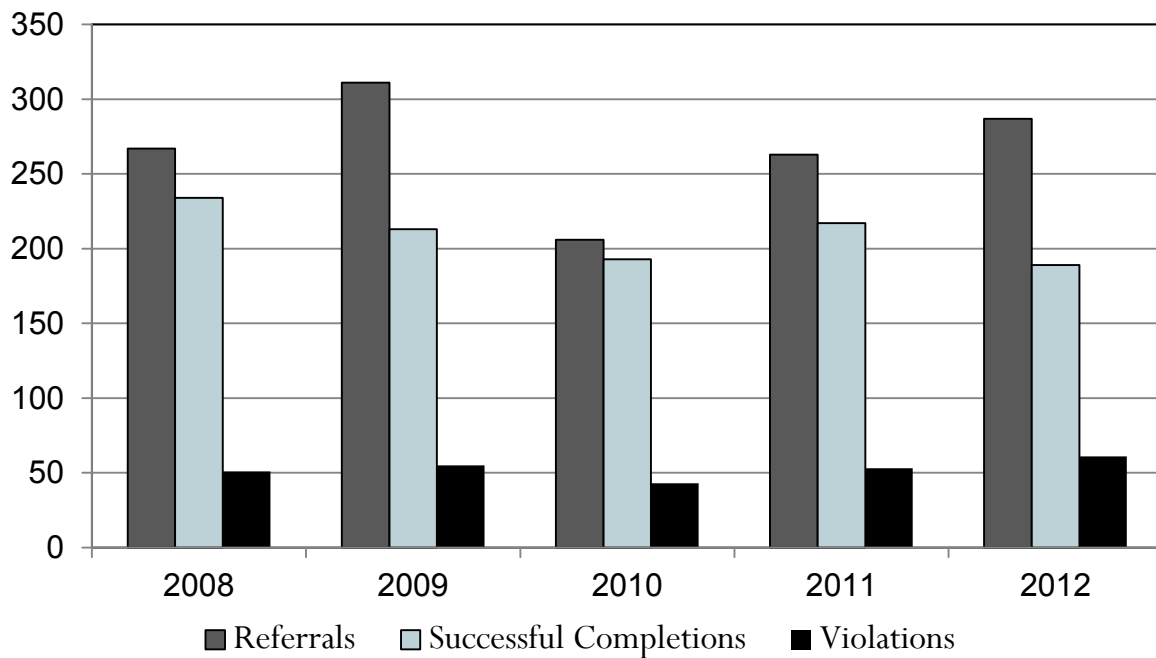
The Community Work Service Project allows offenders to provide volunteer services to agencies and organizations as a condition of probation, Intermediate Punishment, parole, ARD, or in lieu of fines.

The Department sustained **Competency/Accountability Programs** with the continuation of its interagency agreement in 2012 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

Offenders Completing Alcohol Highway Safe-Drivering School 2008-2012



Electronic Monitoring Outcomes 2008-2012



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 an on-site testing system, which is advantageous because clients know they can be tested by probation officers with immediate results in their presence.

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.

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.

JUVENILE PROBATION MISSION STATEMENT

We are dedicated to working with juvenile offenders, their families, victims and the community by utilizing evidence based practices and balanced restorative justice principals, in order to build competencies, reduce risk to reoffend, restore victims, protect the community and assist in promoting long term behavior change.

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.
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.”

Juvenile Probation Primary Dispositions					
Year	Referrals	Informal Adjustment	Consent Decree	Probation	Placement
2012	1239	161	189	393	214
2011	1475	259	184	479	209
2010	1570	219	191	385	238
2009	1700	240	158	455	271

JUVENILE PROBATION PRIMARY DISPOSITIONS

Records for the Department indicate that referrals have been relatively flat or slightly declined the past few years. The complexity of the issues facing a juvenile or their case has increased significantly, requiring more collaboration with other system partners and heightened attention to the dynamics of the case. In 2012 there was a slight increase in the number of youth with filings of violation of probation. Sexual offenses remained fairly consistent as in 2011. With additional statutory requirements related to sex offenders, more attention is required at every stage of the case processing. There was a slight increase in the charge of Possession of a Controlled Substance. The use of drugs among our youth remains a concern. The increased use of synthetic drugs by some of the youth under supervision continues to be monitored closely. Of significant concern is the numerous gang related activities that several of our more delinquent youth are engaged in. Probation Officers are monitoring this activity on a regular basis and intercepting by providing local police with information whenever possible. As has been the case for many years, the number of youth with a mental health diagnosis has continued to increase. These youth require special attention and interventions.

The Juvenile Probation Department has adjusted to the new Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure that became effective in late 2011. As these rules went into full implementation, the number of hearings in 2012 increased significantly requiring that all juveniles who have been adjudicated delinquent and placed on probation must have their cases reviewed every six months. Additional attention to the victim is also required.

EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE EFFORT CONTINUES

The Juvenile Probation Department is still actively engaged in the Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy. As a county considered to be a progressive leader in juvenile justice, the department has continued to train probation officers in the most effective interventions that research has shown to reduce recidivism and guide toward long term behavior change. The department has continued the implementation of 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.** The department continues to use a valid and reliable risk/need assessment, the Youth Level of Service Inventory (YLS/CM) and have trained additional staff as “master trainers.” The use of a risk/need assessment determines the level of risk the youth poses to the community and intervention

strategies to most effectively impact change.

Probation officers continued intensive training on Motivational Interviewing (MI) and the progress seen by the staff is remarkable. MI, when successfully implemented creates an environment to encourage behavioral change among offenders. Solely focusing on compliance of conditions of probation typically does not create long term changes in behavior. Training has allowed probation officers to explore proven methods in communication strategies with juveniles.

In 2012, the Juvenile Probation Department trained nine probation officers to facilitate cognitive behavioral interventions/groups and four additional staff to be trained in the evidence based program "Thinking for a Change." Cognitive interventions are designed to restructure problematic thinking patterns and attitudes. These interventions also focus on developing prosocial skills in managing anger and taking personal responsibility. Probation Officers are also being trained in strategies related to skill building of youth. Research is clear that these interventions have the most impact on delinquent behavior and recidivism in youth, thereby increasing community protection. In 2012 the Juvenile Probation Department began utilizing the new standardized case plan which is yet another method of employing best practices for successful probation supervision.

In addition, in 2012 the Juvenile Probation Department began preparing for the next phase of system accountability. The introduction of the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) is based on the groundbreaking work of Dr. Mark Lipsey. This research is clear about the characteristics of effective delinquency interventions and will be the foundation to improving delinquency programs and services. Contracted delinquency programs will be evaluated for effectiveness based on this research.

As part of the Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy, the Juvenile Probation Department has continued to develop reports to assist in gathering data. This will provide opportunities to assess effectiveness of these strategies, to identify gaps where services are needed, to monitor success of programming and to make data driven decisions. It is important to note that the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy is heavy on training needs. In 2012, the department received grant funding through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency or the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, to cover all of the training expenses related to these activities.

2012 JUVENILE PROBATION HIGHLIGHTS

The Juvenile Probation Department continued their involvement in many other identified activities being implemented throughout the state, including in the areas of detention reform, racial and ethnic disparity, and reducing unnecessary placements for youth that do not pose a risk to the community. The department continued to increase their options for holding youth accountable by developing additional alternatives and graduated responses. The Juvenile Probation Department is committed to transparency in their activities and as a result has engaged many other stakeholders, community members, youth and families in the discussions on system improvement.

In 2012, Probation Officers continued to engage in collaborative working relationships with other county and community system partners. Interactions with police departments, child welfare representatives, school officials and others occur on a regular basis. The Juvenile Probation

Department and the Office of Children and Youth continued to work closely together to enhance services for shared cases. These efforts have been instrumental in eliminating duplication of services and presenting a seamless treatment plan.

The County of Lehigh, which previously was chosen as a Systems of Care site, continued to work on implementation of processes to guide the interactions of multisystem youth with mental health involvement and continued to assist in more effective and expedited services. The Juvenile Probation Department continues to lead collaborative partnerships by coordinating the Lehigh County Youth Collaborative and its various subcommittees and also by participating in the Children's Roundtable and Criminal Justice Advisory Board.

Diversion opportunities continued in 2012. The Juvenile Probation Department continued to use the Evening Reporting Center (ERC), Community Justice Panels (CJP) and School Justice Panels (SJP). The Juvenile Probation Department continued to refer youth to the Mentoring Program which matches youth to college students for tutoring and mentoring. Moravian, Muhlenberg, Cedar Crest and Lehigh Carbon Community College assist with this program.

The Juvenile Probation Department remained committed to enhancing the community service efforts within the department. The Community Service Work Programs in Lehigh County are recognized statewide for its innovativeness and youth accountability. Youth under supervision are required to complete a certain number of community service hours as an accountability measure, and for those youth unemployed; the hours can be applied toward restitution to the victim.

JUVENILE PROBATION OUTCOME MEASURES

Probation officers are required to report outcome measures whenever they release a juvenile from probation supervision. These outcomes measure activities while under supervision and do not measure variables such as juveniles who reoffend after their case is closed.

Outcomes on 791 Juvenile Probation Cases Closed in 2012	
Juveniles who completed a community service obligation in full	87.3%
Juveniles in school or employed at case closing	90.3%
Juveniles who paid their restitution in full	81.4%
Juveniles who re-offended while under supervision	20.2%
Juveniles with a technical violation of probation requiring further court action	18%
Juveniles committed to placement (28 days or longer)	20.6%
Juveniles who completed Victim Awareness classes	95.5%
Juveniles who completed a Competency Development activity while under supervision	96.9%

JUVENILE PROBATION DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS

In addition to the 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.

2012 Juvenile Probation: Client Profile on Referrals

• Sex		• Offense Type	
– Male	70.0%	– Felony	16%
– Female	30.0%	– Misdemeanor	55%
		– Other	29%
• Race		• Ethnicity	
– White	64%	– Hispanic	45%
– Black	31%	– Non-Hispanic	54%
– Multi Racial	5%	– Unknown	1%
– Asian	0%		

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.

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.

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.

2012 Magisterial District Courts of Lehigh County Case Filings

Summary Traffic Cases	49,516
Summary Non-Traffic Cases	12,676
Civil Cases	10,336
Criminal Cases	7,195

2012 Magisterial District Judges	
District Court	Magisterial District Judges
31-1-01	Patricia M. Engler
31-1-02	Senior MDJs
31-1-03	Ronald S. Manescu
31-1-04	David M. Howells
31-1-05	Michael D. D'Amore
31-1-06	Wayne Maura
31-1-07	Robert C. Halal
31-1-08	Michael J. Pochron
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	Michael J. Faulkner
31-3-03	David B. Harding

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. In 2012 a reestablishment of the magisterial districts occurred. This review of the magisterial districts is a mandatory process that must

occur no less than every ten (10) years. The intent of the review is to balance the caseloads and workloads of the individual offices. Once approved by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court any changes are scheduled to be implemented in 2013.

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 Judge Administrator, H. Gordon Roberts.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE—The justice of the peace has authority to issue warrants and to hear cases. They may impose fines and limited jail sentences for minor cases. In serious cases, they hold the case for court. They perform marriage ceremonies and administer oaths.

In 1962, Justices of the Peace married couples and heard minor civil and criminal cases in neighborhood courts throughout the county.

In 2013, Magisterial District Judges still hear small claims cases, determine if a criminal case should be held for court, and may perform marriages in courts located within their assigned districts.