

**2020
ANNUAL
REPORT**

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF LEHIGH COUNTY

**THE 31ST JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA**

PRESIDENT JUDGE EDWARD D. REIBMAN

JUDGE ROBERT L. STEINBERG

JUDGE J. BRIAN JOHNSON

JUDGE KELLY L. BANACH

JUDGE JAMES T. ANTHONY

JUDGE MARIA L. DANTOS

JUDGE MICHELE A. VARRICCHIO

JUDGE DOUGLAS G. REICHLEY

JUDGE MELISSA T. PAVLACK

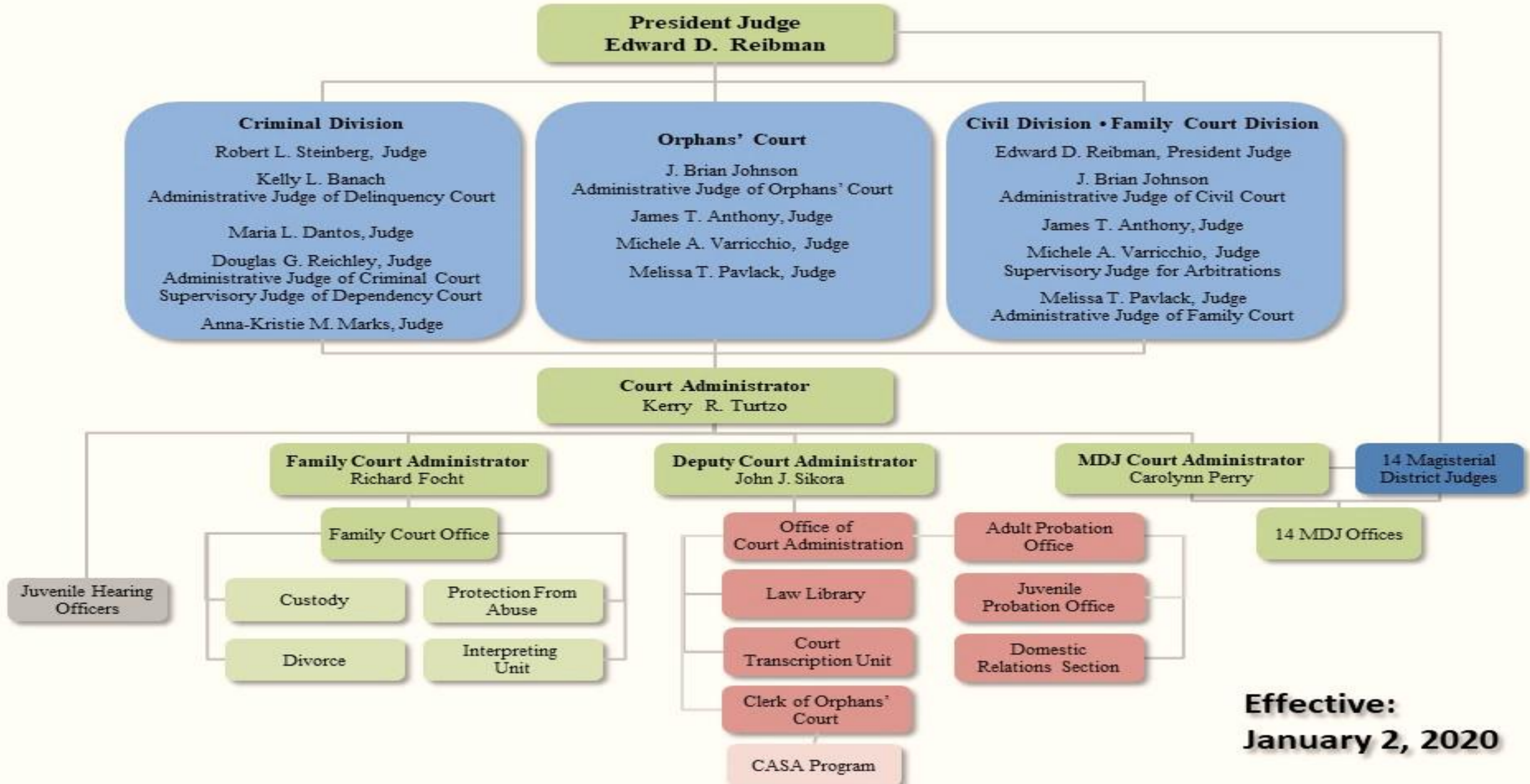
JUDGE ANNA-KRISTIE M. MARKS

SENIOR JUDGE CAROL K. MCGINLEY

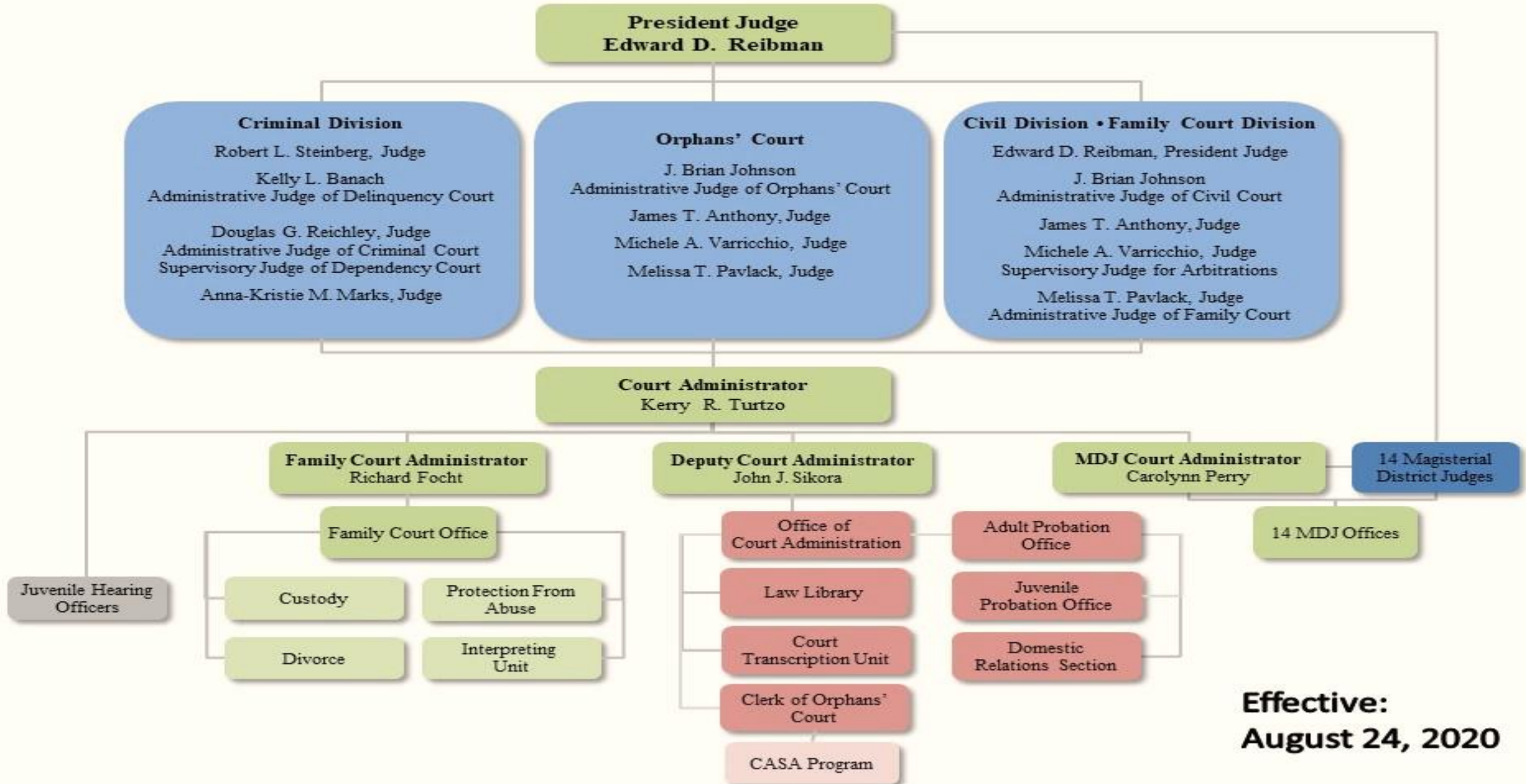


2020 Judges of the Court of Common Pleas

2020 Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas Organization



2020 Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas Organization



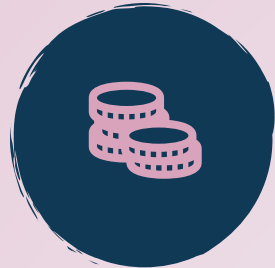
2020 Judicial Emergency

COVID -19



COVID-19

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic caused a Judicial Emergency to be declared in March of 2020. The Judicial Emergency remained in effect into 2021.



Financial Impact

Grant money was used to provide personal protective equipment (PPE), disinfecting supplies, signage and plexiglass shields throughout the court offices and courtrooms.



Remote Service Solutions

The court and judicial offices developed and implemented additional remote services such as expanded eFiling and video conferencing wherever possible.



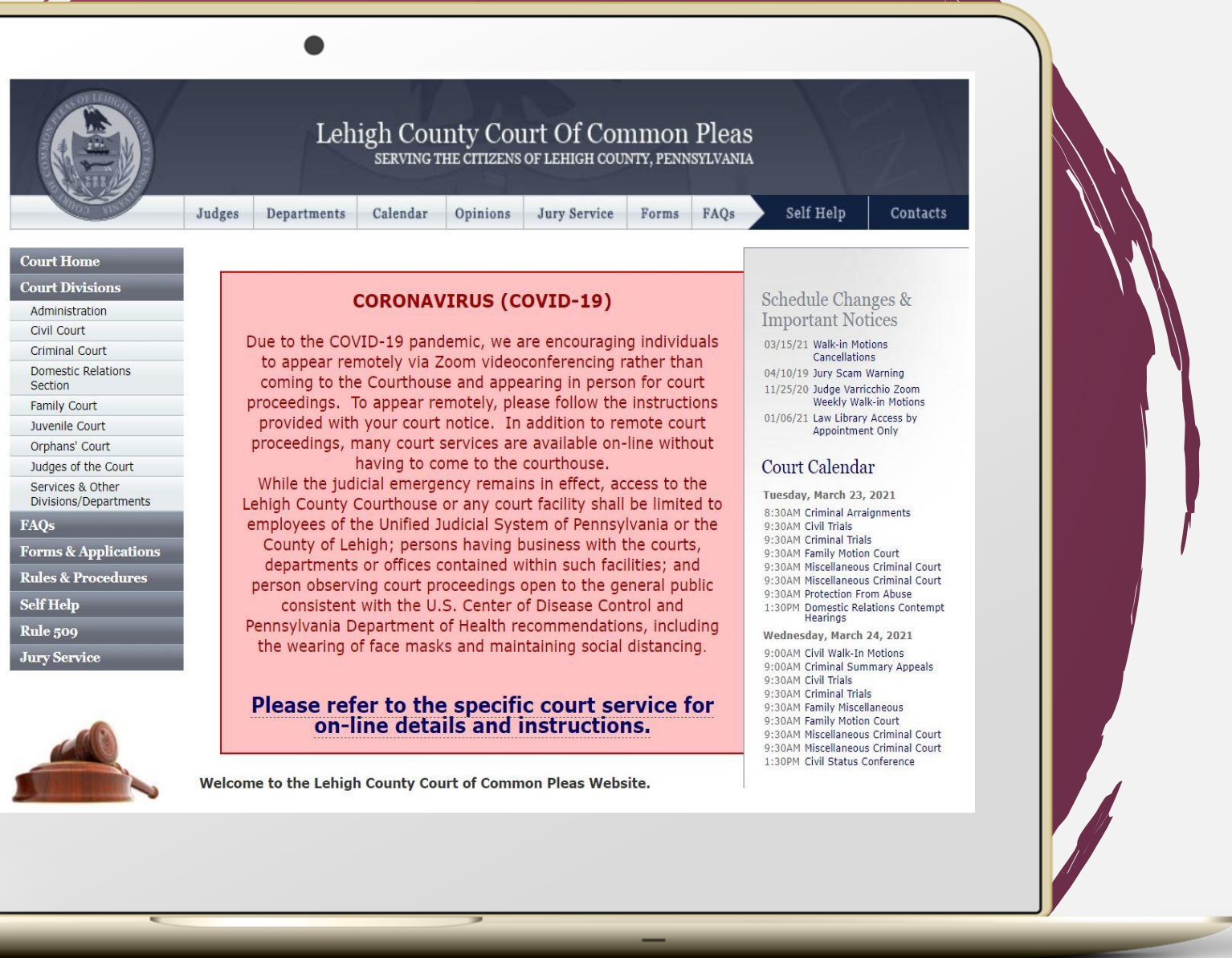
Social Distancing

The court rapidly mandated social distancing and facial coverings, installed plexiglass shields, and reconfigured offices to reduce COVID's impact on employees and court users.



Working Remotely

New and available technologies were placed into service to maximize the number of employees capable of working remotely.



www.lccpa.org

The court's extensive website was indispensable in providing information about and access to court services during the Judicial Emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many court services were transitioned to remote, no-contact versions within days of the building closures.

COURT ADMINISTRATION

PROVIDING MANAGEMENT



Office of the Court Administrator

Managing Court Administrative Functions

Complex modern courts require the delegation of administrative functions to the Court Administrator. The Office of the Court Administrator manages the non-judicial functions of the Court under the guidance of the President Judge, providing judges with more time for adjudication.

In Lehigh County, Jury Management, the Court Transcription Unit, Library Information Services and the CASA program are considered components of Court Administration.

In 2020, District Court Administrator, Kerry R. Turtzo and Deputy District Court Administrator, John J. Sikora, continued to serve in the positions to which they were appointed in 2016.

Personnel

Fiscal
Management

Calendar &
Scheduling
Management

Jury
Management

Information
Systems

Facilities
Management

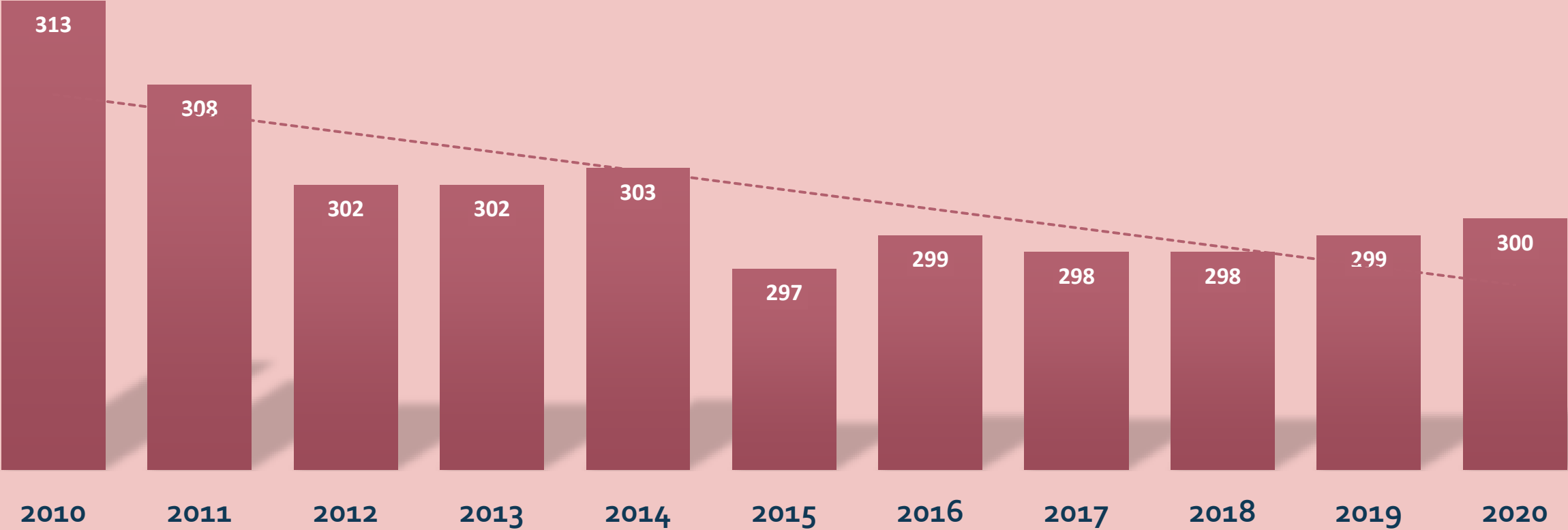
Equipment &
Technology
Management

Legal Resource
Procurement

Records Control

Public
Information

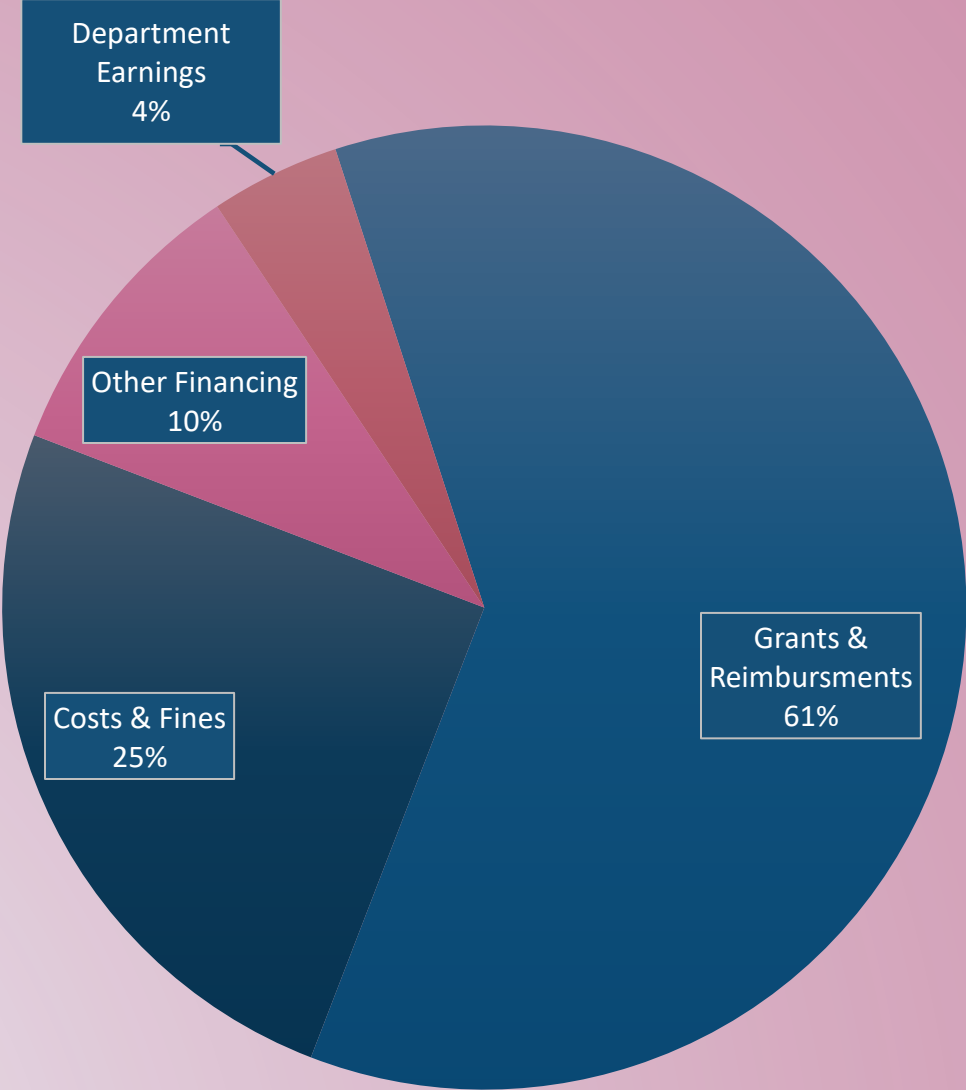
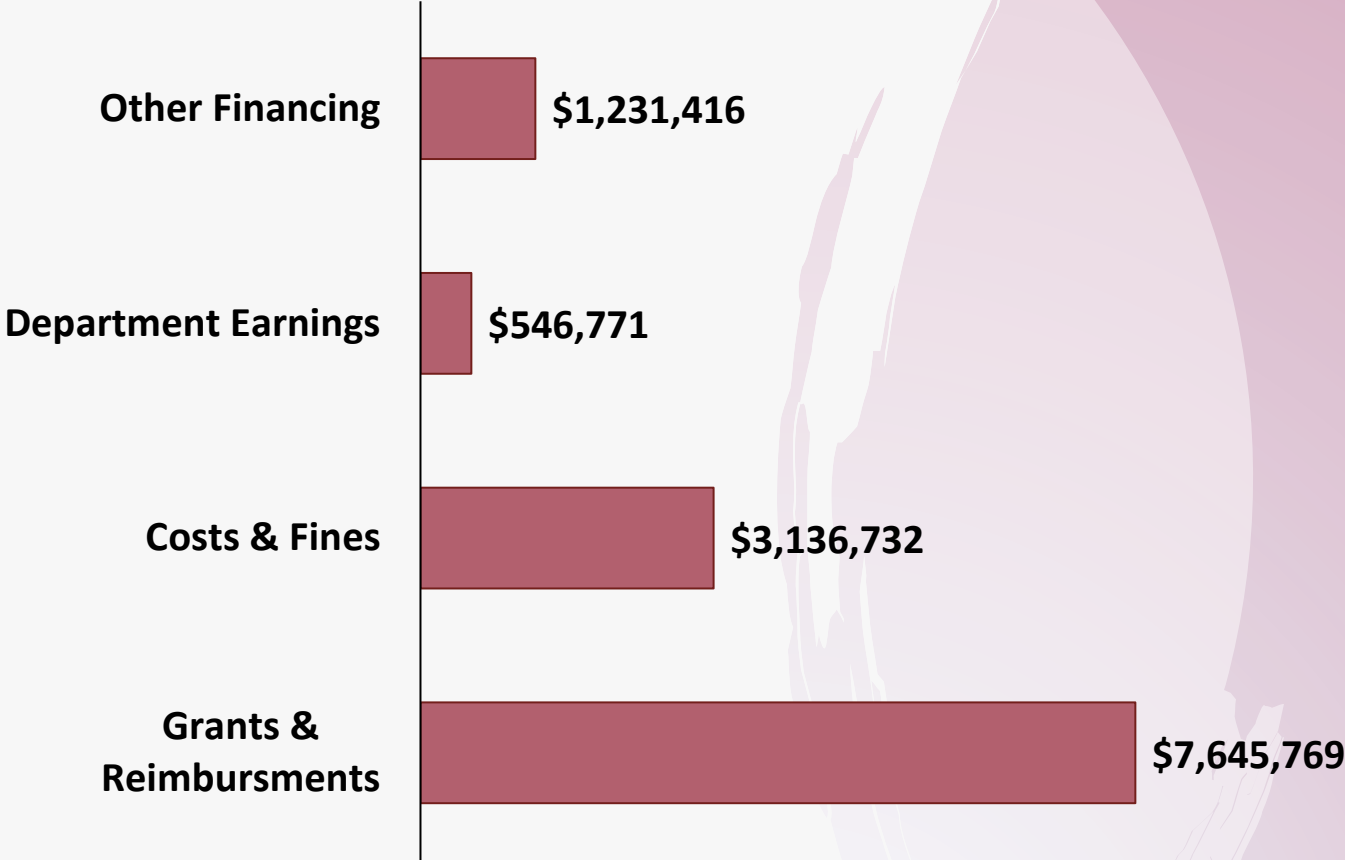
Full Time Judicial Personnel



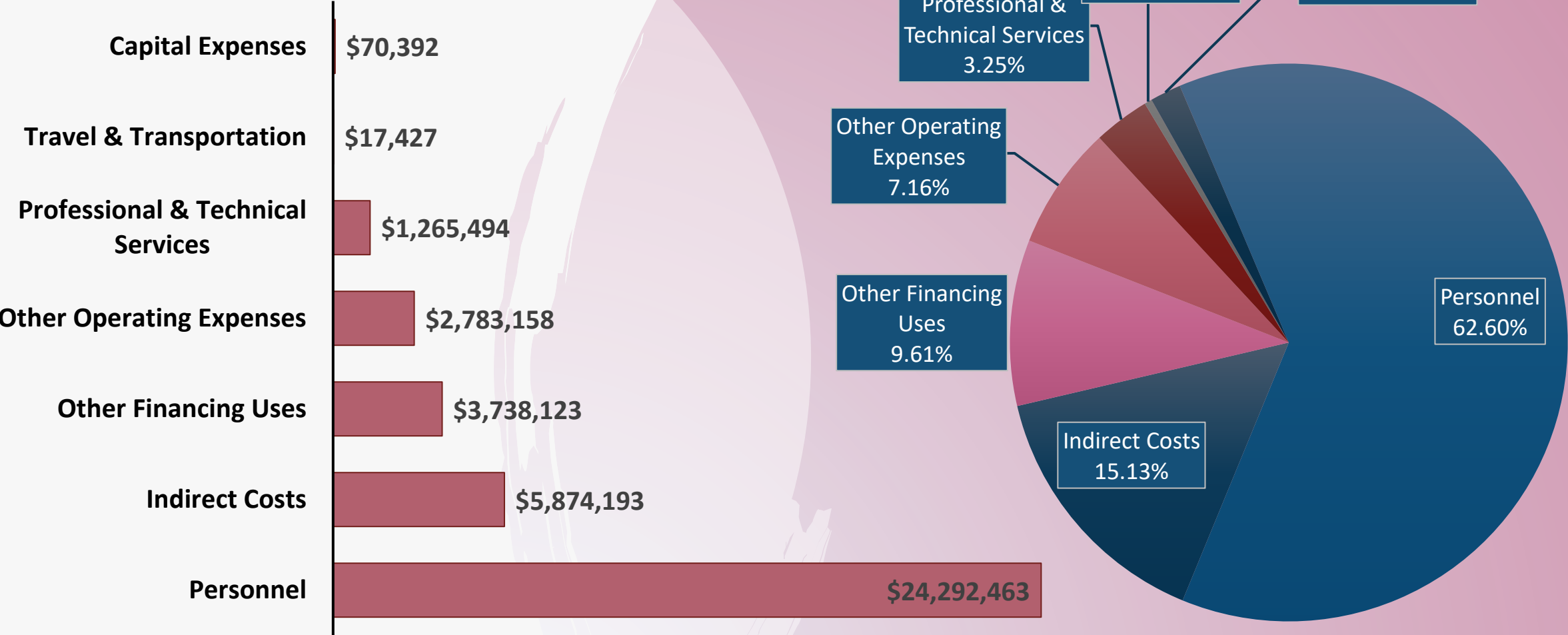
Judicial Personnel by Department

YEAR	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
COURT ADMINISTRATION	83	83	76	76	75	75	75	75
ADULT PROBATION	50	50	52	54	54	54	54	55
JUVENILE PROBATION	49	49	48	48	48	48	48	48
ORPHANS' COURT	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
DOMESTIC RELATIONS	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
DISTRICT JUDGE	51	51	51	51	51	51	52	52
LAW LIBRARY	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	302	303	297	299	298	298	299	300

Court Revenue 2020



Court Expenses 2020



YOUTH PLACEMENT



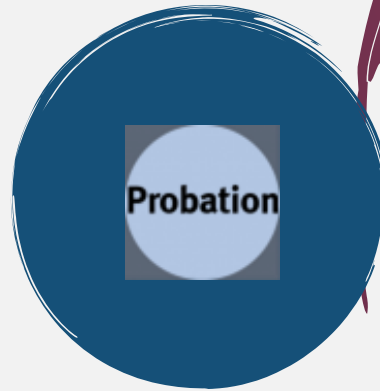
The Court is reimbursed in the form of services at state youth institutions and funding for some delinquent youth placement expenditures.

JUVENILE PROBATION



The Juvenile Probation Department works closely with the Lehigh County Office of Children and Youth to produce a “needs-based” budget maximizing state assistance to the Court.

ADULT PROBATION



Adult Probation receives state funding based on the rate of compliance with state-wide standards for probation operations. Currently the Lehigh County Adult Probation Department receives the maximum in state funding.

Grant Funding

The Court of Common Pleas Pursues Federal and State Grants to Offset the Costs of Court Programs.

Most grant funding is available in the areas of Adult and Juvenile Probation and is often earmarked for the creation of new programs.

2020 Criminal Justice Board Grant Activities

ADULT PROBATION				
PROJECT TITLE	GRANT	GRANT \$	DEPARTMENT	STATUS
Adult Probation/ Drug/Alcohol Restrictive Intermediate Punishment	PCCD	\$660,000	SCA/ Adult Probation	Awarded
Grant-In-Aid Continuing Program for the Improvement of Adult Probation Services	PCCD	\$573,536	Adult Probation	Awarded
Bryne Justice Assistance Grant – Specialty Drug Court	PCCD	\$150,000	Adult Probation	Awarded
Specialty Drug Court Grant	AOPC	\$30,000	Adult Probation	Awarded

2020 Criminal Justice Board Grant Activities

JUVENILE PROBATION			
PROJECT TITLE	GRANT	GRANT \$	STATUS
Grant-In-Aid/Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy Implementation Plan	JCJC	\$467,389	Awarded
Juvenile Court Judges' Commission Training Grant	JCJC	\$17,496	Awarded

27,300

JURY
SUMMONSES
MAILED

971

JURORS
SENT TO VOIR
DIRE FOR
SELECTION

1,025

JURORS
REPORTING
FOR DUTY

224

JURORS
EMPANELED OR
SWORN IN

Jury Management

Selection & Control of Jurors

Lehigh County has adopted the “one day, one trial” method of juror selection to increase the efficiency of the jury system while making a minimal imposition on the lives of residents. Citizens selected for jury duty will serve one day, or, if selected for a jury, will serve the duration of the trial. This method ensures juries are available to judges and only keeps those jurors necessary. The selection and control of juries requires cooperation between jury management staff and courtroom staff. The web-based jury management system allows potential jurors to complete qualification questionnaires online. Correspondence to jurors about their status and reminders may be via text message and email reducing reliance on the U.S. Postal system.



CASA: Court Appointed Special Advocate

Providing "Eyes and Ears"
for the Court

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 Pennsylvania 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.

Court Appointed Special Advocate 2020

Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas is Home to Pennsylvania's Third Largest CASA Program.

70

ABUSED AND NEGLECTED
CHILDREN WERE PROVIDED
WITH CASA SERVICES

48

CASA VOLUNTEERS
ACTIVELY
SERVED CHILDREN
IN 2020

15

CASA VOLUNTEERS
SERVED AS
EDUCATIONAL
DECISION MAKERS

CASA Permanent Homes 2020

A CASA volunteer's objective is to assist the Court in making decisions that will provide safe, secure and permanent homes for at-risk children. A CASA representative attends every hearing for their children. CASA volunteers aid the court by submitting written reports making recommendations in the best interest of the child.



Kinship Care

1

Child was Placed with
Relatives in a Kinship
Care Solution



Reunited

7

Children were
Reunited with their
Biological Family



Adopted

6

Children were
Expedientiously
Adopted

Public Law Library Services



**Operating the Only
Public Law Library in
Lehigh County &
Providing Self-help,
Online & Print
Resources**

Legal Resources For Court & County



**Providing Judges,
Court, & County
Employees with
Essential Legal
Sources Necessary for
Job Performance**

Document Production & Related Services



**Providing Scanning,
Color Printing,
Brochure
Development &
Related Document
Services to Library
Patrons &
Courthouse Offices**

Library Information Services

Founded in 1869, the Lehigh County Law Library fills an essential role for the court and community by providing access to Pennsylvania and United States legal sources. Lorelei A. Broskey, M.L.S., Director, has overseen the three related missions of the Library Information Services department since 1989.

Library Information Services 2020

The Declaration of a Judicial Emergency, the consequential COVID-19 related closing of the Law Library in March of 2020, and the restriction of entry to the courthouse suppressed in-house use of the Public Access terminals and employee legal research totals by about 40%. However, a total of nearly 60,000 legal research transactions were still performed for a retail value of over \$4 million in Westlaw and Lexis. There was no interruption in service to the public as the Law Library went virtual on March 19, 2020 delivering documents via email whenever possible.



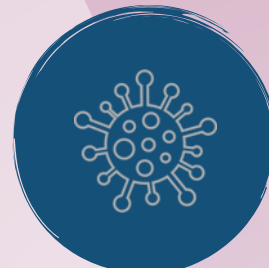
\$3.5 Million

Retail value of the 57,893 Westlaw research transactions performed by Court and County Employees at the job site and at home and usage by Law Library Patrons during 3,500+ hours of research.



\$430,917.83

Actual cost of all online and print legal resources received, processed and delivered to the Lehigh County Law Library, Court and County offices on 785 invoices most representing multiple print volumes.



178 & 673

Virtual reference service continued and 178 documents were emailed to patrons while the Law Library was closed from March 18 to July 1, 2020. During the entire Judicial Emergency, 673 total documents requested in more than 300 virtual service requests were delivered by Law Library staff.



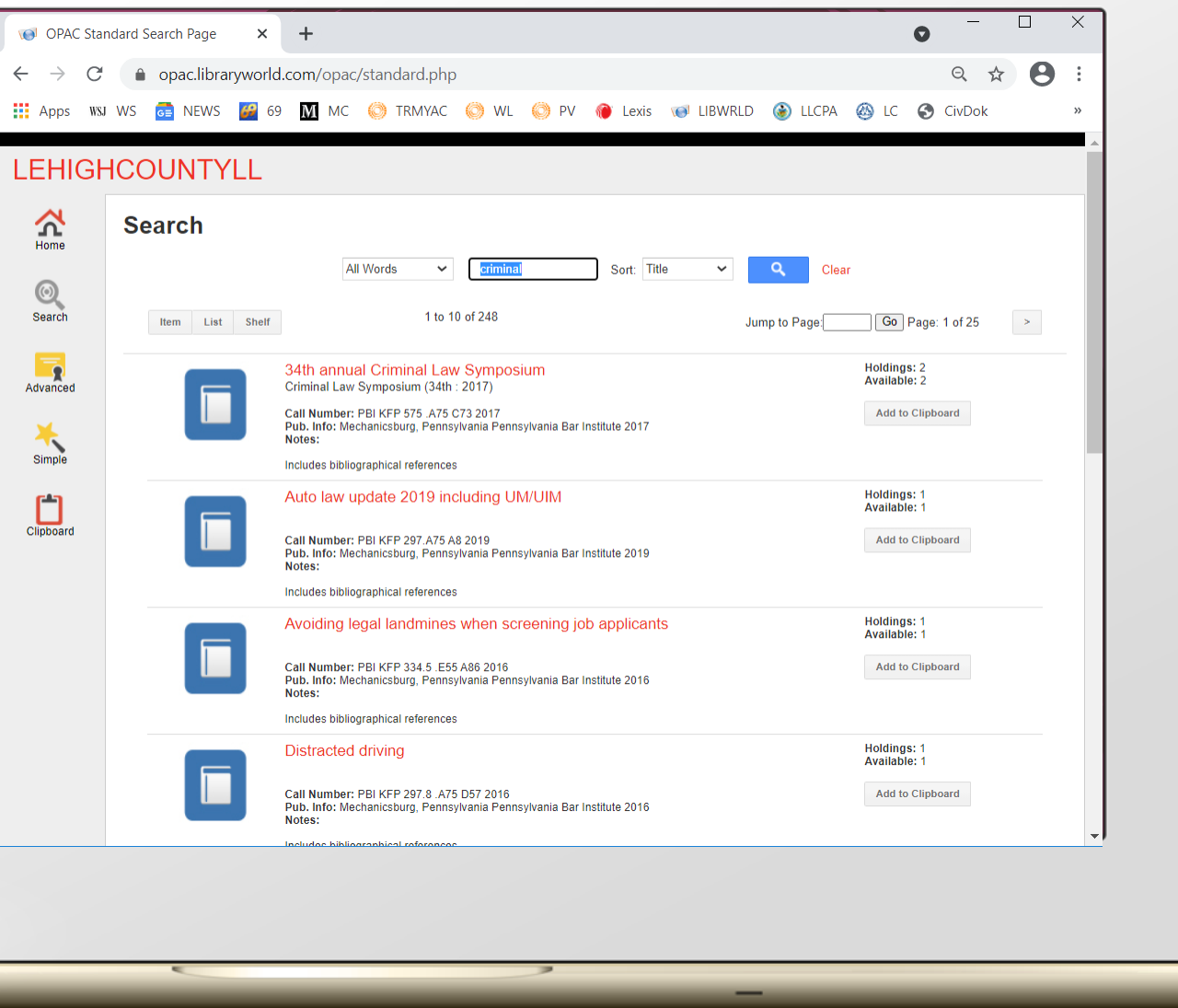
6,062

The total of 4,406 Westlaw Public Access Program and 1,656 Lexis Advance Public Access Program searches meant some 6,062 were performed by or for patrons in the public Lehigh County Law Library during 2020.



4,888 & 866

4,888 pages of legal research were printed or photocopied by patrons in the public Law Library and 866 book circulation transactions were handled by Lehigh County Law Library staff.



Lehigh County Law Library Internet Based Public Catalog

The Law Library Department page on the Court's Website www.lccpa.org provides a link to the Law Library's Online Catalog. The Law Library's existing online presence and the Court's internet based Self-Help System expedited the transition to virtual services during the Judicial Emergency.

THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

PROVIDING CIVIL AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE



Court Divisions

The Three Main Divisions of the Court of Common Pleas of Lehigh County



Criminal/Juvenile Court Division

Criminal Court

Juvenile Delinquency Court



Civil/Family Court Division

Civil Court

Family Court

Juvenile Dependency Court



Orphans' Court Division

The Orphans' Court

Marriage License Bureau

Criminal/Juvenile Court 2020

The judges assigned to the Criminal/Juvenile Court Division are responsible for handling adult criminal cases as well as juvenile delinquency matters.



2,968
NEW ADULT
CRIMINAL
CASES

9
HOMICIDE
CASES

2020 Criminal/Juvenile Court Judges

Robert L. Steinberg, Judge

Kelly L. Banach, Judge

Administrative Judge of
Criminal and Juvenile Delinquency Divisions

James T. Anthony, Judge

Maria L. Dantos, Judge

Anna-Kristie M. Marks, Judge

Criminal/Juvenile Court Division

Criminal Filings and Dispositions 2020

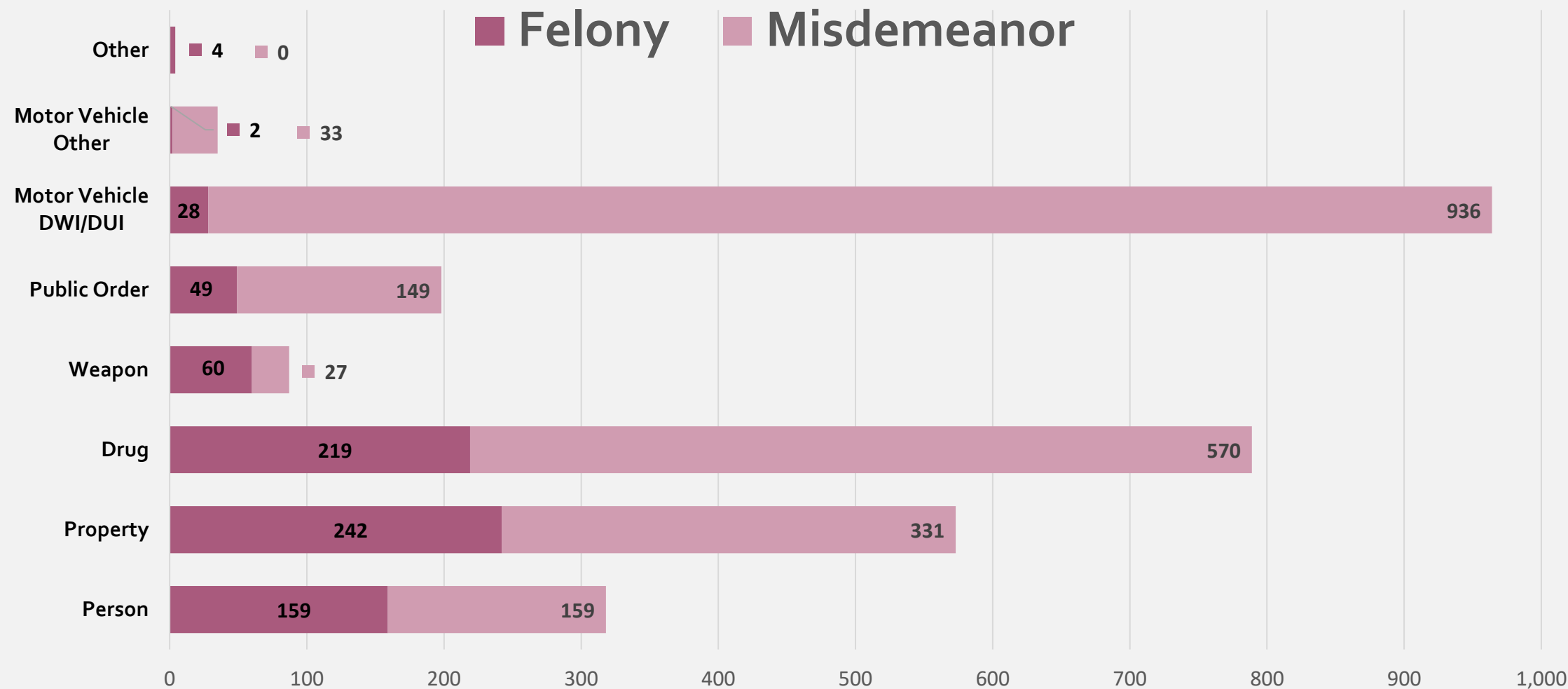
Total Cases Processed	3,223
New Cases	2,968
Reopened Cases	193
ARD	1,191
Dismissed/Withdrawn	75
Guilty Plea	1,748
Jury Trial	7
Non-Jury Trial	8
Inactive	185
Other	9

Adult Criminal Court

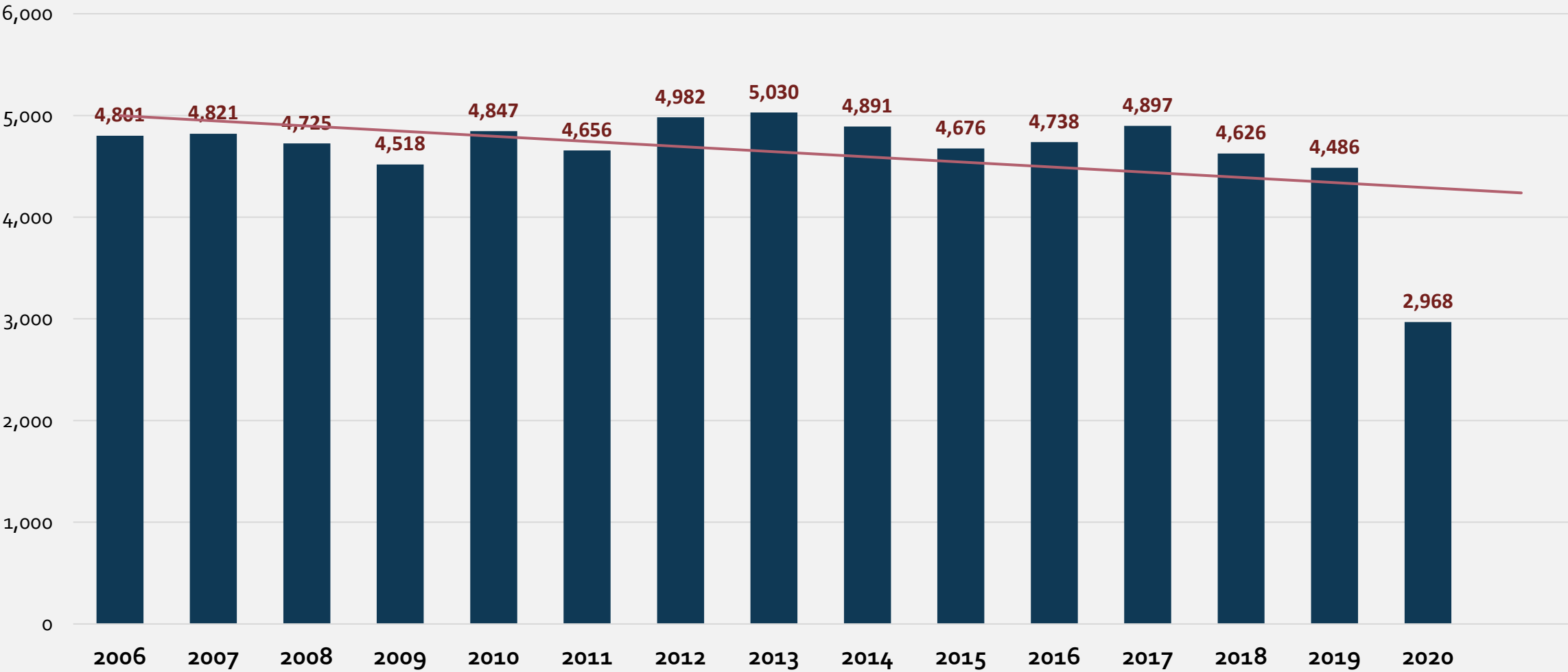
The judges in the Criminal/Juvenile Court Division utilize an individual calendaring system. The assigned judge handles the case from formal arraignment through disposition.

All probation and parole violations and any post-sentence motions are handled by the judge who sentenced the defendant.

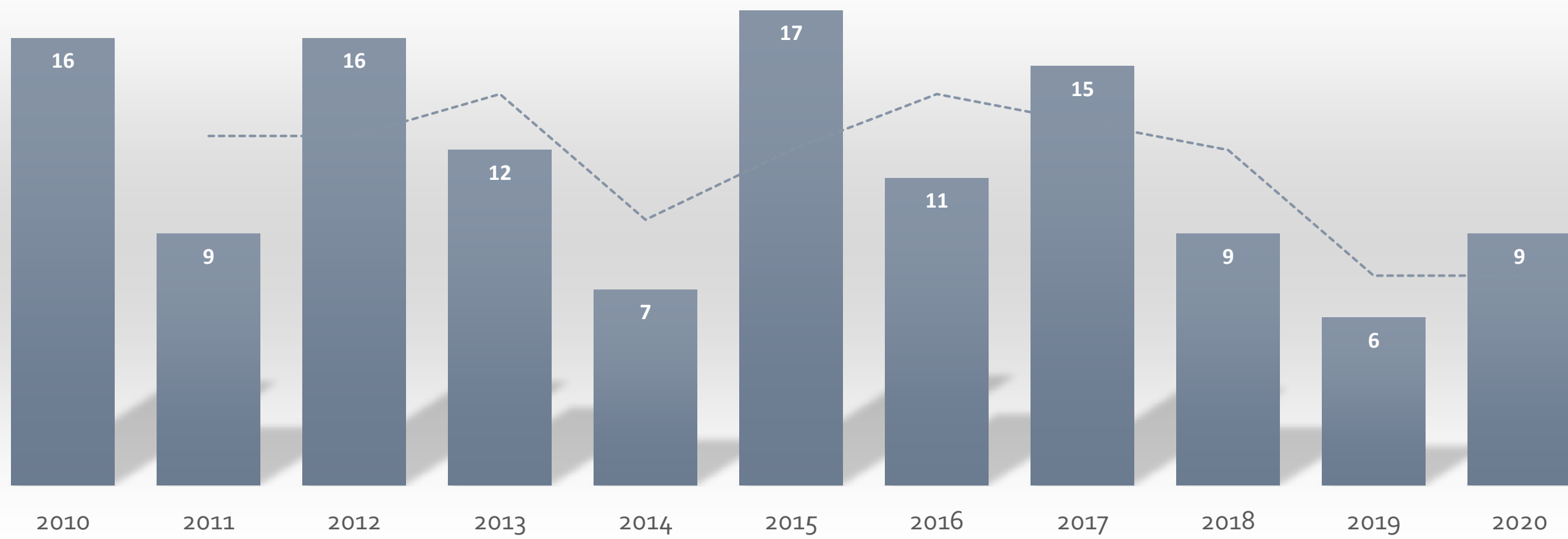
Criminal Cases by Type 2020

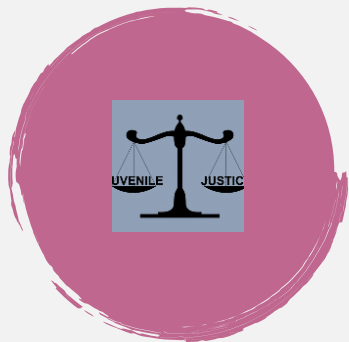


New Criminal Cases Filed 2006-2020



Annual Homicide Filings with Moving Average





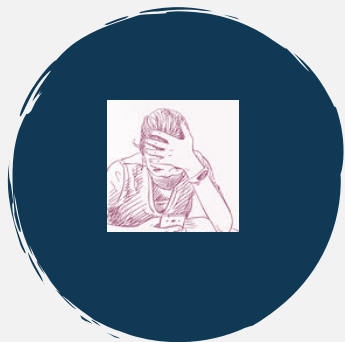
Juvenile Court

In 2020, Juvenile Court fell under both the authority of the Administrative Judge of the Criminal/Juvenile Division and the Administrative Judge of the Civil Division. The Juvenile Court Division is responsible for cases involving juvenile delinquency and juvenile dependency. The Juvenile Court judges are assisted by two full-time Juvenile Court Hearing Officers, Theresa M. Loder, Esquire and Jacquelyn C. Paradis, Esquire, who adjudicate both delinquency and dependency cases.

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

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

Juveniles may be both delinquent and dependent.



Dependent Juveniles



Delinquent Juveniles

Juvenile Justice in Lehigh County

In 2020, Juvenile Judges and Hearing Officers disposed of 413 delinquency cases and 315 dependency cases.

There were 216 new delinquency filings in 2020.

Civil/Family Court Jurisdictions



The diagram consists of four overlapping circles. The leftmost circle is dark purple and contains the text 'Civil Actions'. The top-middle circle is dark blue and contains the text 'Family Court' followed by a list of jurisdictions: 'Divorce', 'Custody', 'Protection From Abuse', and 'Child & Spousal Support'. The top-right circle is pink and contains the text 'Orphans' Court' followed by a list of jurisdictions: 'Parental Rights', 'Adoptions', and 'Guardianships'. The bottom-right circle is a lighter shade of pink and contains the text 'Juvenile Dependency'.

Civil Actions

**Family
Court**

Divorce
Custody
Protection From Abuse
Child & Spousal Support

**Orphans'
Court**

Parental Rights
Adoptions
Guardianships

**Juvenile
Dependency**

Civil/Family Court Division

CIVIL COURT OPERATIONS

Civil Actions

Civil actions involve the resolution of private conflicts between people or institutions. Civil cases include personal injury or personal property claims, matters of equity, products liability, malpractice, or commercial and contract disputes.

License and Registration Suspension Appeals, Mortgage Foreclosures, Assessment Appeals, Quiet Title Actions, Zoning Appeals, Ejectment and Actions in Replevin are also in the civil category.

There are approximately 1,800 civil cases pending in the Court's open inventory.

Civil Operations Section

In 2020, the Civil Operations section of the Court Administrator's Office, under the direction of Court Operations Officer Toni Dries and Court Operations Director Linda Fritz, was responsible for scheduling and tracking all civil cases.

The staff of the Civil Operations section schedule and distribute notices for status conferences, arguments, hearings, settlement conferences, and trials. The staff is responsible for tracking the result of each court proceeding. The Judges of the Civil/Family Division work with the Civil Operations staff to proactively manage the civil caseload.

Civil/Family Court Judges 2020

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

Edward D. Reibman, President Judge

**J. Brian Johnson, Judge
Administrative Judge of Civil Court and
Orphans' Court**

James T. Anthony, Judge

**Michele A. Varricchio, Judge
Supervisory Judge for Arbitrations**

**Melissa T. Pavlack, Judge
Administrative Judge of Family Court**

Civil Court Synopsis 2020



2,800

**Civil Cases
Docketed**



2,804

**Civil Actions
Processed**



163

**Mortgage
Foreclosures**



647

**Credit Card
Debt Collection
Cases Docketed**

Orphans' Court Division

WHY THE NAME ORPHANS' COURT?

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 is a division of the Clerk of Judicial Records). All scheduling for Orphans' Court cases is done by the Office of the Clerk of the Orphans' Court.

The Clerk of the Orphans' Court is an appointed position held by Wendy A. W. Parr. Janet Thwaites, Esquire, serves as Orphans' Court Counsel.

A full-time law clerk, three full-time assistant clerks and a full-time auditor, (who reviews all formally filed fiduciary accounts), comprise the staff of the Clerk of the Orphans' Court. In addition to the Orphans' Court Administrative Judge, J. Brian Johnson, other judges are assigned to the Orphans' Court Division.

Orphans' Court Jurisdiction

THE ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION	Oversees Trusts, Powers of Attorney & certain aspects of non-profit organizations	Reviews & approves settlement of litigation/claims involving minors, incapacitated persons and/or decedents' estates	Audits all formal fiduciary accounts
THE ORPHANS' COURT HEARS	Appeals from Register of Wills, including will contests or contested letters of administration	All parental rights termination cases	Petitions for adult guardianships (incapacities)
	Disputes regarding administration/distribution in decedents' estates	Adoptions & minors' guardianship cases	Judicial by-pass hearings required by the Abortion Control Act
THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT	Issues marriage licenses upon "in person" application	Maintains marriage license records & issues certified copies of those records	Responds to requests for access to both identifying & non-identifying information from adoption files

Orphans' Court Unique Challenges

REQUIREMENTS POSING UNIQUE CHALLENGES TO ORPHANS' COURT		
Statutory requirement to appoint counsel to represent each indigent parent who contests the termination of his/her parental rights, (many cases involve more than one paternal parent) 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.

Orphans' Court Synopsis 2020



9

Minor Guardian Cases



35

Adoptions Granted



45

**Fiduciary Accountings
Audited, Confirmed,
& Adjudicated**



39

**Minors' Settlements
Involving Lump Sum
Payouts, Creation of
Trusts, & Structured
Settlements Approved**



83

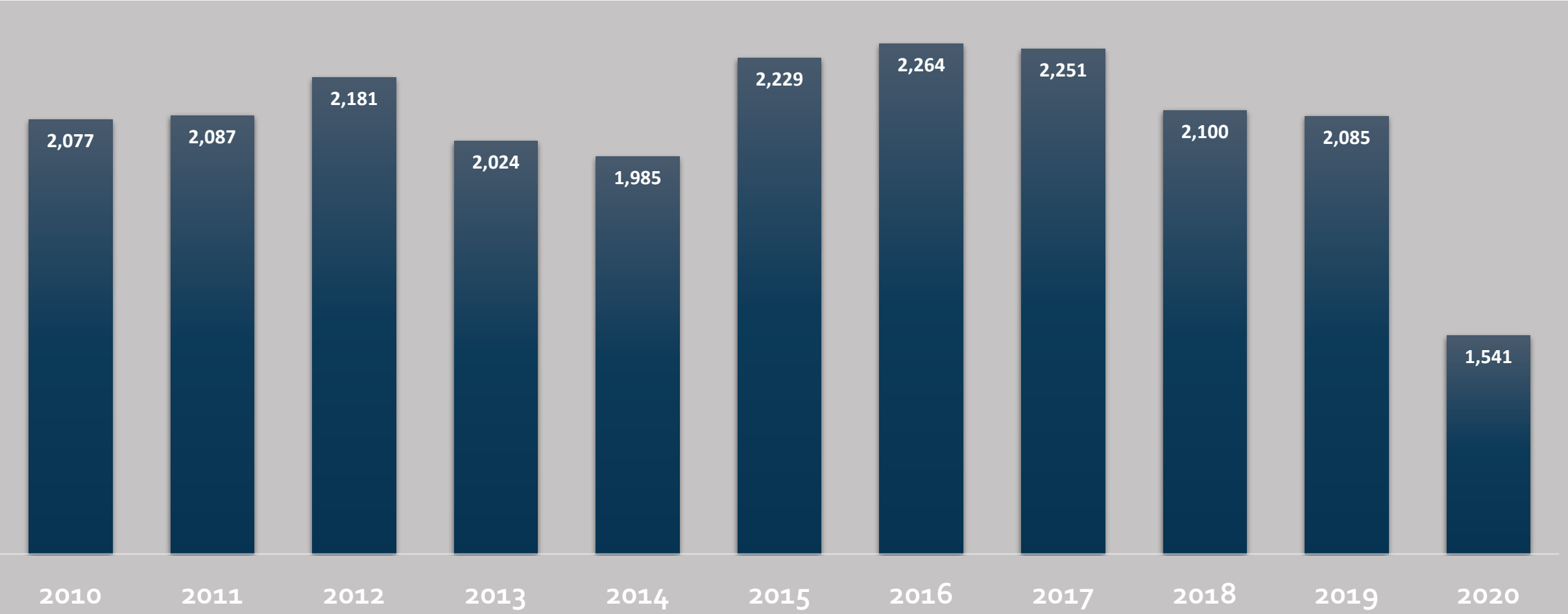
**Persons Adjudicated
Incapacitated &
Appointed Guardians
for Their Persons
and/or Estates**



1

**Judicial Bypass
Hearings Pursuant
to the Abortion
Control Act**

Marriage Licenses Issued in Lehigh County



In May 2014, Pennsylvania Law changed to permit same-sex marriages.



Family Court Office

Custody

Divorce

Protection From Abuse

Interpreting Unit



Domestic Relations Section

Paternity

Child Support

Spousal Support



Probation

Adult Probation and Parole Office

Juvenile Probation Office

The Court Related Offices

Providing Operational Support to The Court of Common Pleas

FAMILY COURT OFFICE

PROVIDING FAMILY RELATED COURT
SERVICES



Family Court: Child Custody

Most parties in custody cases are not represented by attorneys. This graphic illustrates an approximation of the ratio.

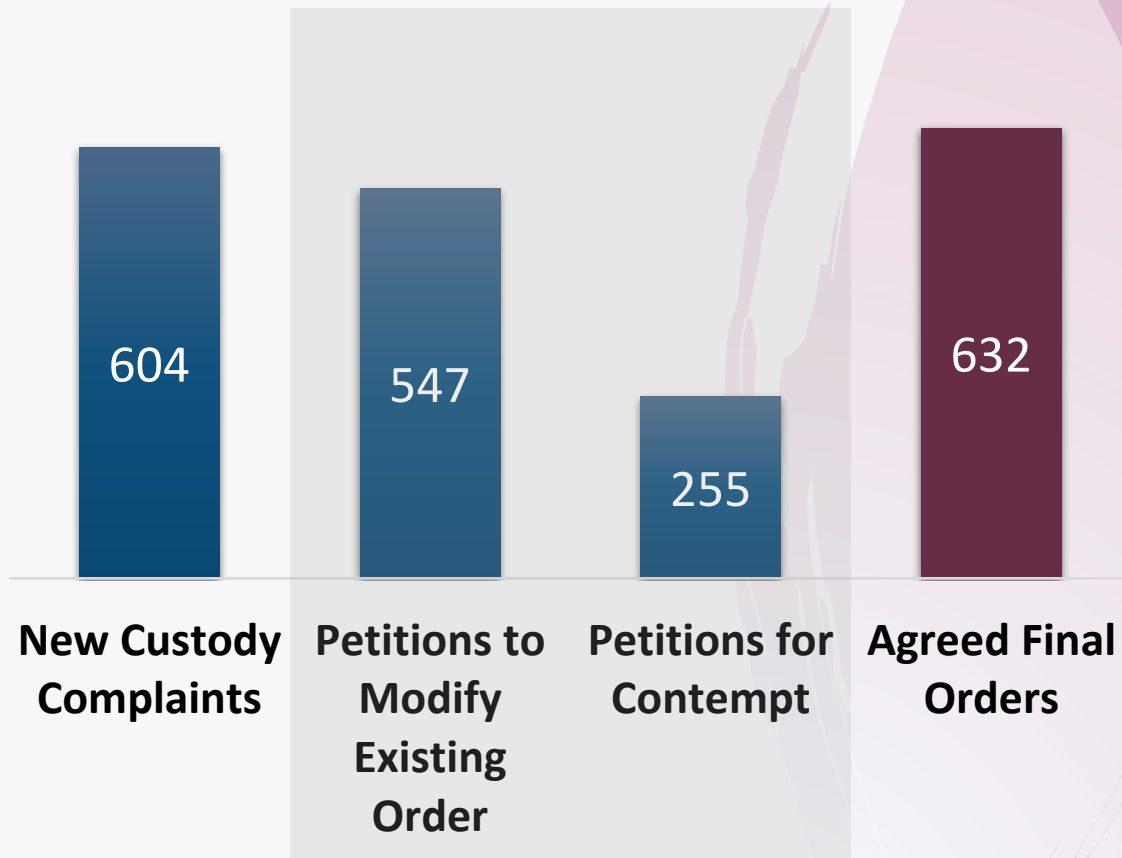
When a self-represented custody litigant comes to the Family Court Office, an intake employee asks questions to begin the assessment of whether the Lehigh County Court has jurisdiction to decide the custody issue. The necessary forms to start a custody lawsuit are available online and filings are now completed by e-filing (as of 1/1/2020). General instructions on completing the forms and filing and serving the pleadings are also available on the Court's website at lccpa.org.

SELF-REPRESENTED, 80%

**REPRESENTED BY
ATTORNEY, 20%**

Family Court: Child Custody

2020 Custody



After the filing of one or more pleadings, custody cases usually proceed to a mediation or conciliation conference where efforts are made to have the parties reach an agreement. Most cases are scheduled for conciliation conferences before a Custody Hearing Officer (CHO), unless the parties agree to mediate their case before a mediator. The CHO identifies the issues and helps the parties settle the case according to the best interests of the child. If a settlement is reached, the CHO prepares a Court Order that summarizes the custodial agreement. If the parties are unable to agree, the case proceeds to a trial on the merits before a Judge (most cases) or a CHO (only in cases involving solely partial physical custody.)

In 2020, there were 604 new custody cases filed. In addition, 547 Petitions to Modify an Existing Order and 255 Petitions for Contempt were filed. Petitions to Modify and Petitions for Contempt are often filed at the same time.

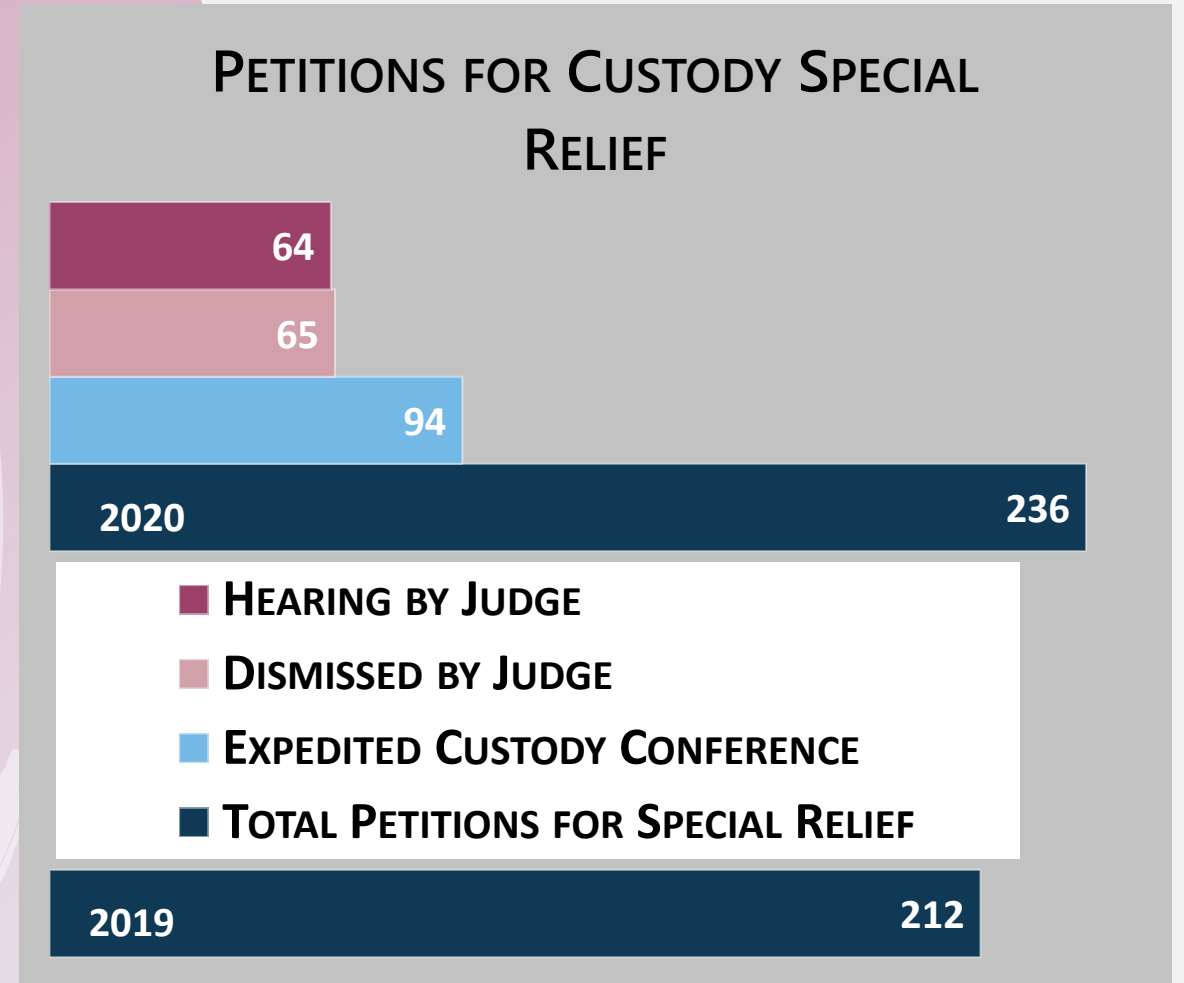
Agreed final orders resulting from custody conferences before the CHO numbered 632 in 2020. Other custody cases were discontinued, transferred, withdrawn, dismissed by the court, resolved by stipulations of the parties, or went to trial before a judge or CHO.

Family Court: Custody

Custody Special Relief

The Domestic Relations Code and the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure permit the filing of a Petition for Special Relief in instances where a litigant believes an emergency exists in a custody case. In 2020, the Family Court Office received 236 Petitions for Special Relief.

In 2020, of the 236 filings, 94 were ordered to proceed to an expedited custody conference before a Custody Hearing Officer, while 65 were summarily dismissed by a Judge. The Judges held 64 hearings on Petitions for Special Relief. Thirteen cases were otherwise disposed.



1011

New Divorce
Cases Filed

577

Uncontested
Divorce Cases
Filed

698

Divorce
Decrees
Entered

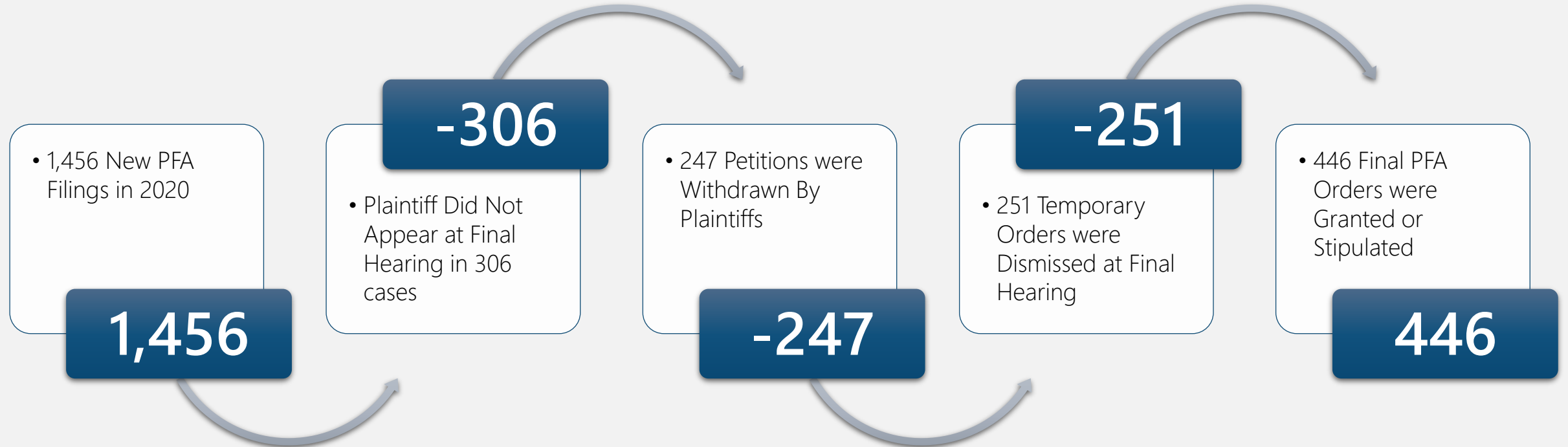
97

Contested
Divorce Cases
Filed

Divorce Synopsis

Contested divorce cases are often resolved by the Master in Divorce, an attorney appointed by the Court. Following the filing of a motion by a divorce litigant to appoint the Master to a case, the Master conducts one or more settlement conferences with the litigants and attempts to resolve the issues. If those efforts are unsuccessful, the Master conducts hearings and prepares reports and recommended Orders subject to judicial review. Approximately 95% of cases before a Master are settled before a hearing.

Family Court: Protection From Abuse



In 2020, Approximately 30% of New Protection From Abuse Petitions Resulted in Final Orders of Protection.

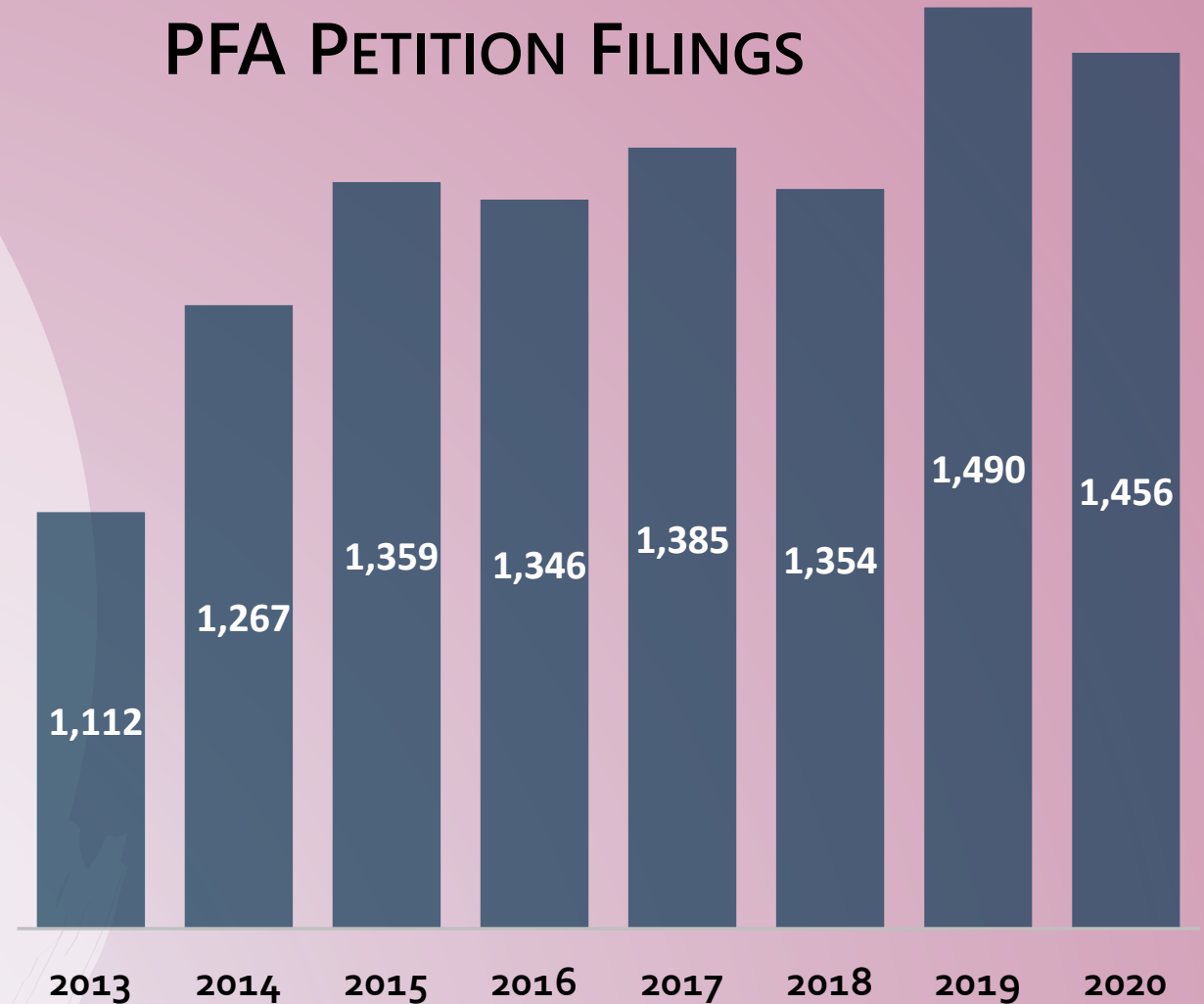
Protection From Abuse

Pennsylvania law requires every court to assist victims of domestic violence who seek Protection From Abuse Orders. Individuals may seek a protection order on their own behalf and/or on behalf of their minor children.

Lehigh County Family Court staff provides private intake assistance. Court assistance hours are from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. daily. Litigants appear before a judge at 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 3:00 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, litigants appear at 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 3:00 p.m. Special security measures are taken in all cases, especially in cases where cross-petitions have been filed.

Emergency PFA relief is available after 2:00 p.m. through the Magisterial District Judges.

PFA PETITION FILINGS





4

New
Intimidation
Cases



3

New Sexual
Violence
Cases

Protection From Sexual Violence & Intimidation in 2020

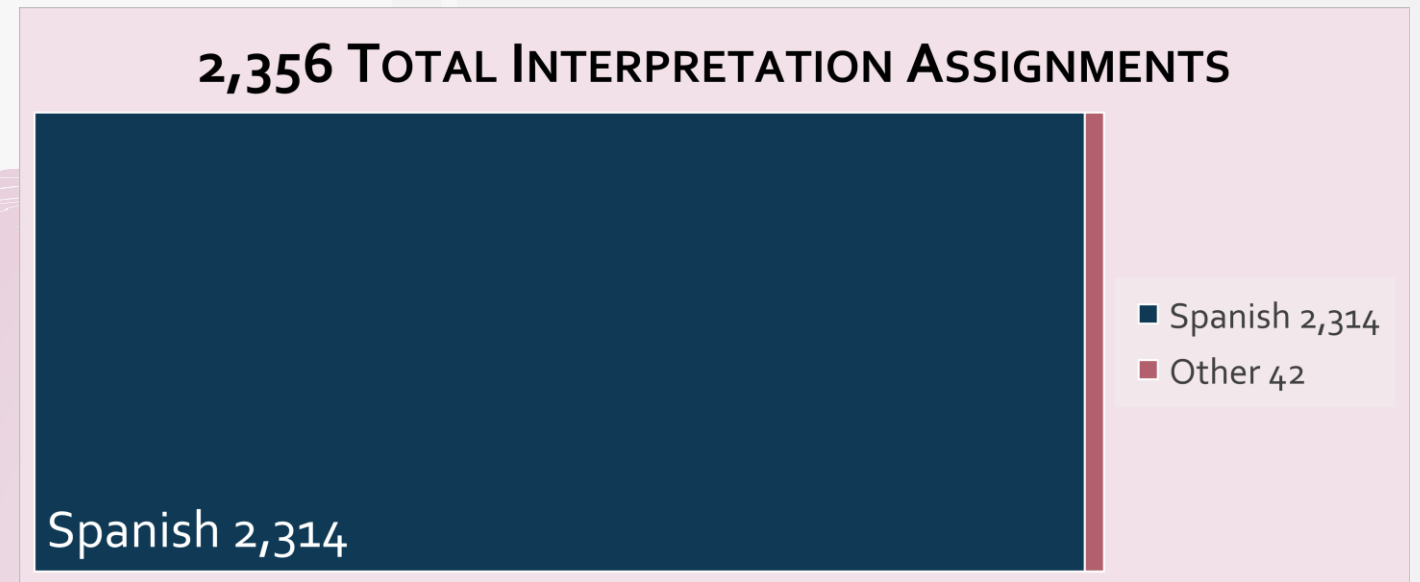
The Protection From Sexual Violence and Intimidation Act became effective in Pennsylvania in July 2015. The Act protects victims of sexual violence and intimidation who may not be covered by the Protection From Abuse Act. A victim may seek a Sexual Violence Protection Order against a perpetrator where there is no family or personal relationship between them. A minor may obtain a Protection From Intimidation Order against an offender who is 18 or older for certain types of conduct. Assistance available from the Lehigh County Family Court Office is the same as that described in the Protection From Abuse information on the prior page.

Family Court: Interpreting Unit

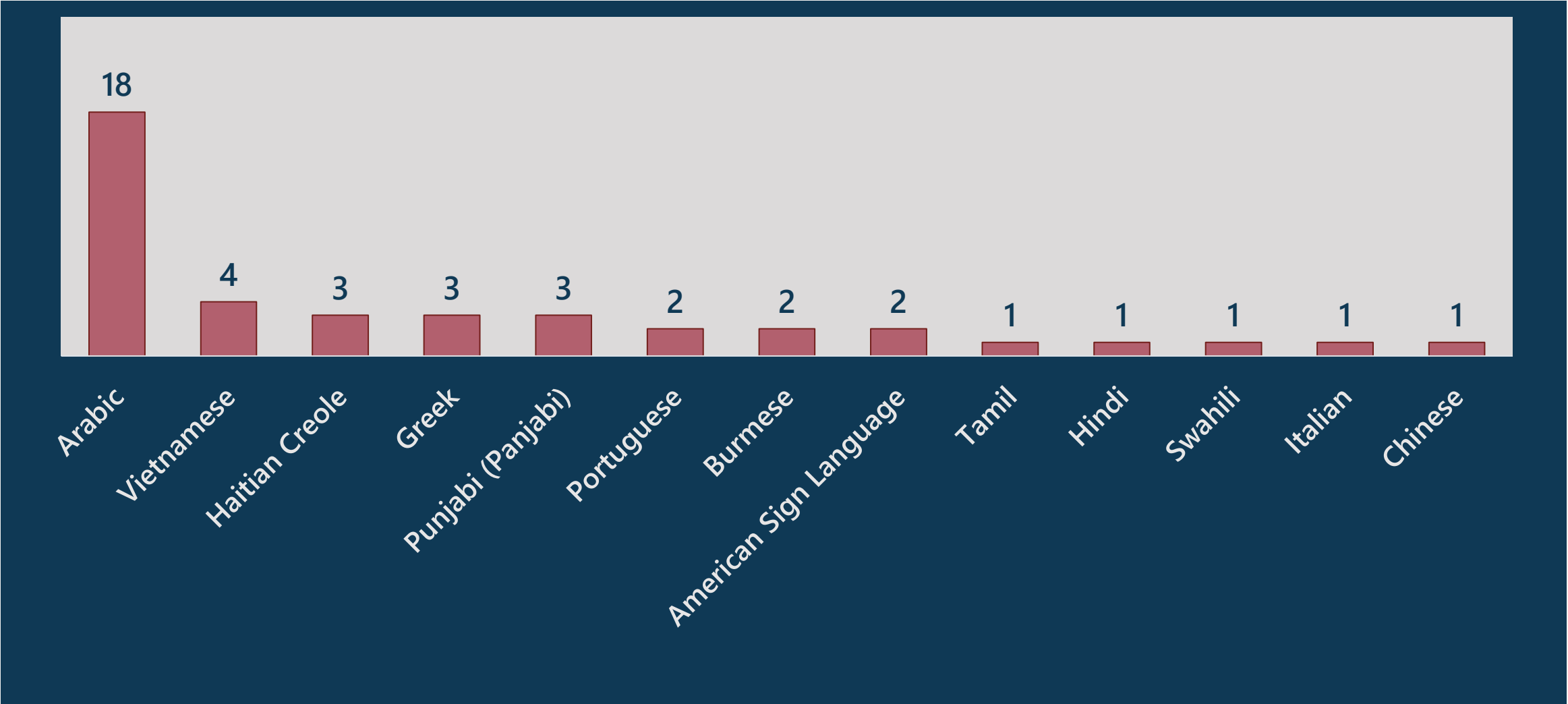
Providing Foreign And Sign Language Interpretation

The Court provides interpreters in criminal and family court proceedings. The Interpreting Coordinator schedules a pool of 25 per diem contractors to carry out court interpreting assignments.

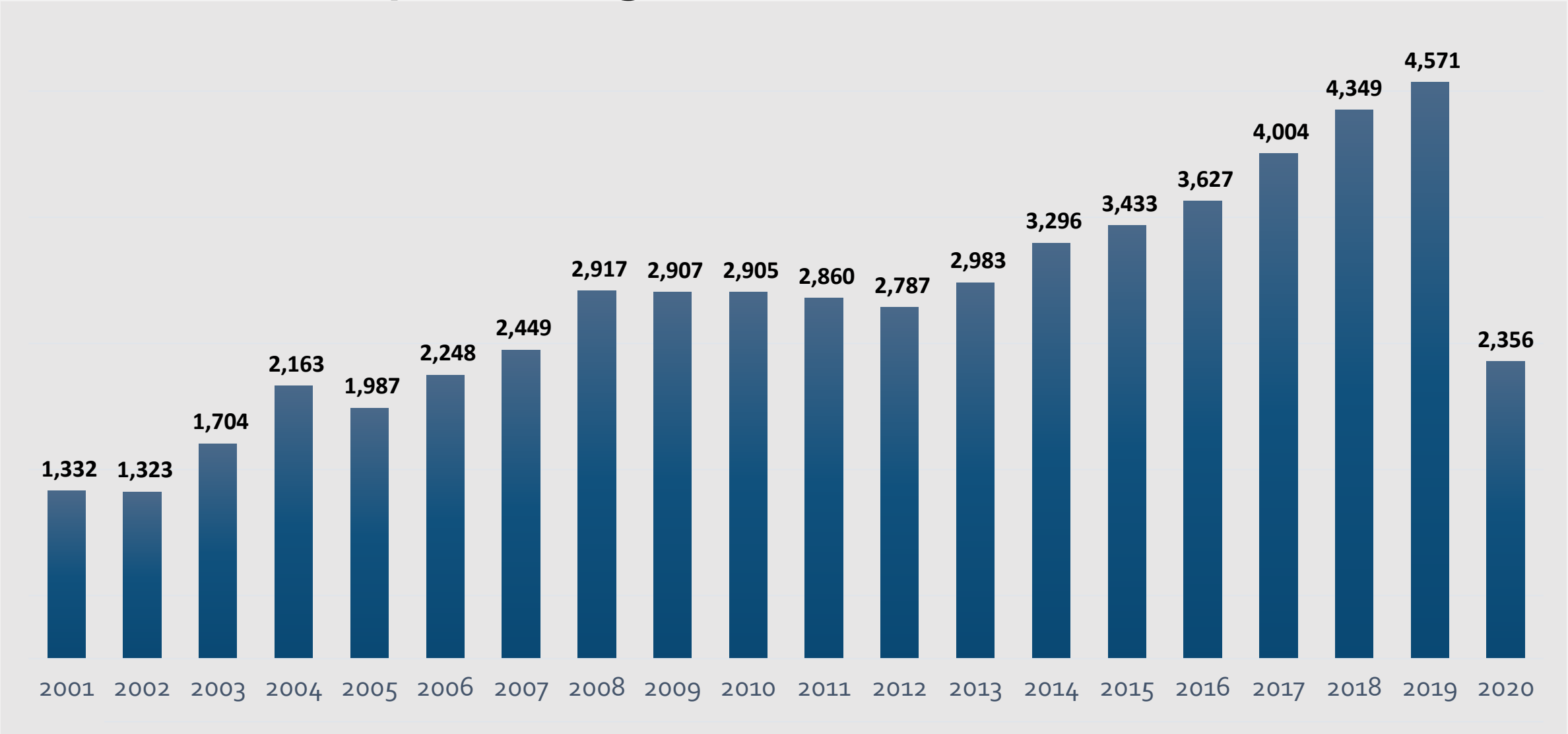
In 2020, there were 2,356 interpreter assignments, 2,314 of which were for Spanish. Telephone interpretation is used when needed. Translations of written documents are also provided by the Interpreting Unit.



Languages Excluding Spanish in 2020



Annual Total Interpreter Assignments 2001 to 2020



DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION

PROVIDING CHILD AND SPOUSAL SUPPORT

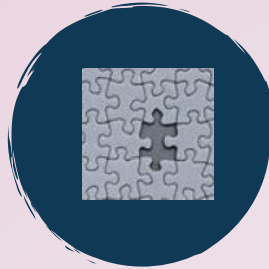


Services Provided by the Domestic Relations Section

The Domestic Relations Section (DRS) is the provider of child support services for the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas under the federal Title IV-D child support program. Under the leadership of Director Julia Parker Greenwood, the DRS is responsible for providing services to dependent children and spouses through the establishment of paternity, location of absent parents, establishment of support orders, and enforcement of support orders.



**Establishing
Paternity**



**Locating
Absent
Parents**



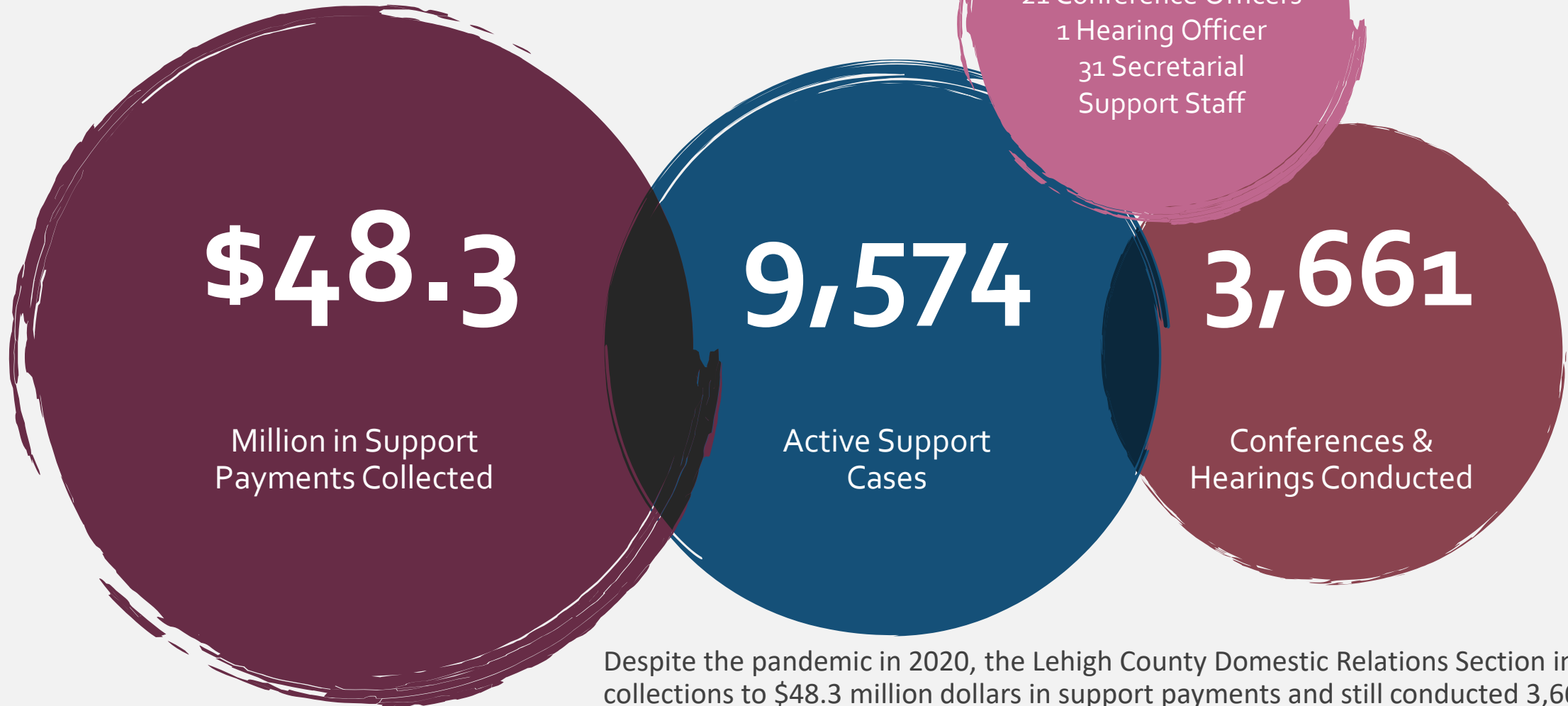
**Establishing
Support
Orders**



**Enforcing
Support
Orders**

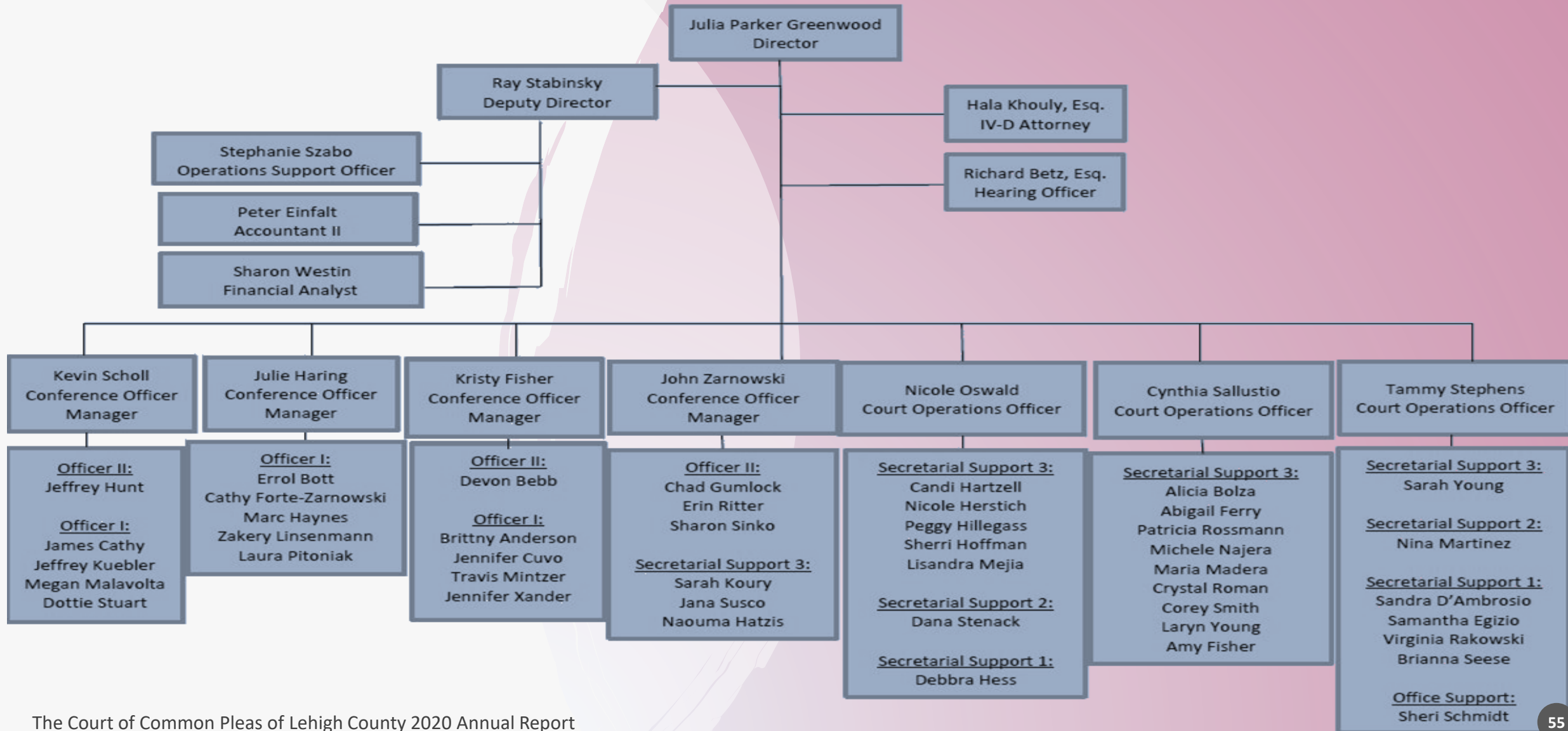
Domestic Relations Section Summary

2020



Despite the pandemic in 2020, the Lehigh County Domestic Relations Section increased collections to \$48.3 million dollars in support payments and still conducted 3,661 conferences and hearings for the establishment and enforcement of support orders.

Domestic Relations Section Personnel 2020



Establishing Child & Spousal Support Orders



In Lehigh County, establishment of a support order progresses under a 3-tier system. A conference officer conducts conferences on support complaints and petitions for modification on existing support orders. If an agreement cannot be reached between the parties at the conference, a temporary or "interim" support order is entered and the case proceeds to a hearing before a hearing officer. The case will be scheduled for a hearing before a Judge of the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas if one of the parties does not agree and files "exceptions" to the support order entered by the hearing officer.

PACSES and PA-SCDU

The Pennsylvania Child Support Enforcement System (PACSES) is a state-wide computer system used to enter, process and track all support case information and case management activities. All support payments that are collected from the defendant by the DRS are sent to the Pennsylvania State Collection and Disbursement Unit (PA-SCDU) and then forwarded to the plaintiff as a support payment.

The DRS Collected
\$48,288,840
in
Support Payments
in 2020.

Case Management Teams

Conference officers and secretarial support staff are assigned to case management teams that are responsible for all case management activities of a support case from the establishment of a support order through the enforcement of a support order.

In 2020, the Domestic Relations Section conducted 2,428 establishment conferences, 487 establishment hearings, and 746 contempt conferences/hearings.

2,428

Establishment
Conferences

487

Establishment
Hearings

746

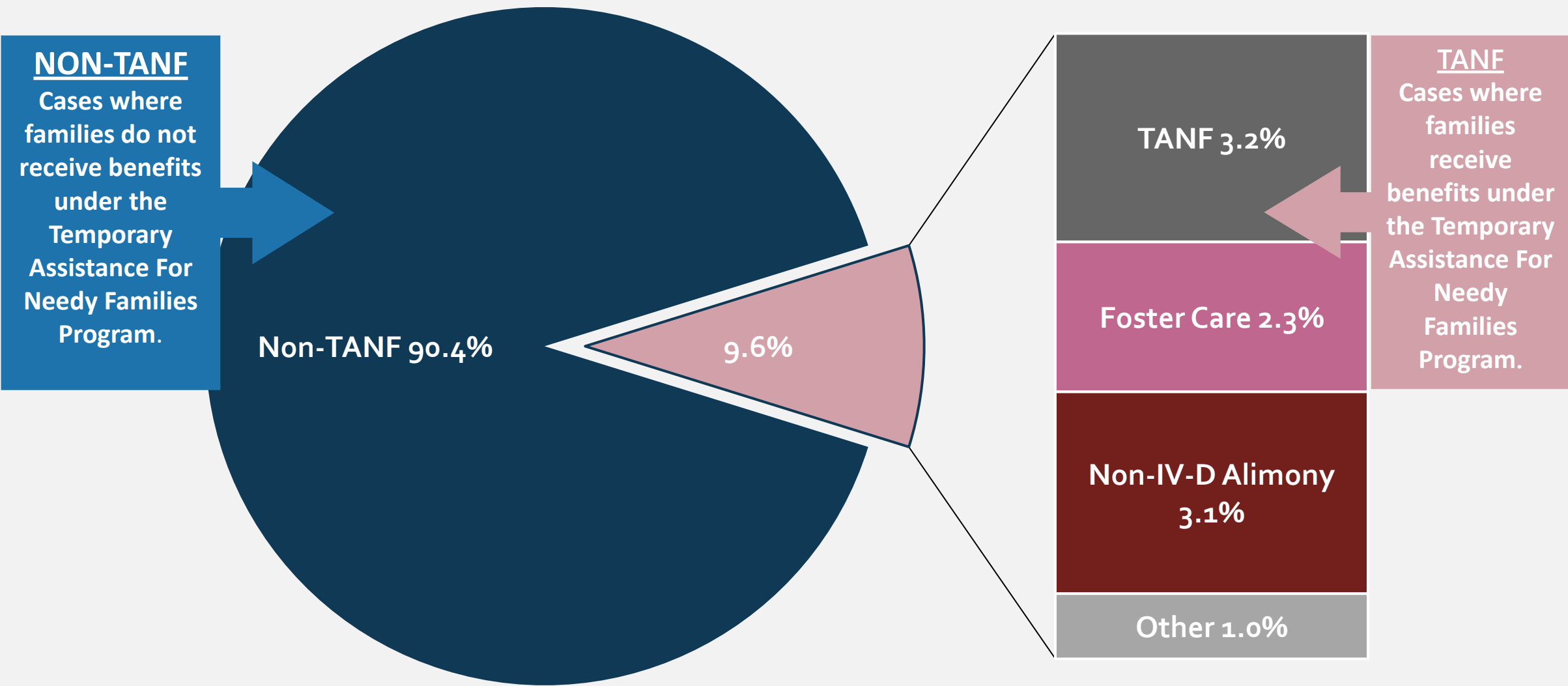
Contempt
Conferences/Hearings

Domestic Relations Section Filings

2020 NON-TANF SUPPORT CASE FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS	
New Cases	2,417
Cases Transferred In	51
TANF to Non-TANF	106
Judge	20
Hearing Officer	362
Conference Officer	2,150
Cases Transferred Out	40
Non-TANF to TANF	44
Cases Processed	2,616

2020 TANF SUPPORT CASE FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS	
New Cases	339
Cases Transferred In	14
Non-TANF to TANF	44
Judge	1
Hearing Officer	104
Conference Officer	278
Cases Transferred Out	21
TANF to Non-TANF	106
Cases Processed	510

2020 Support Cases by Case Type



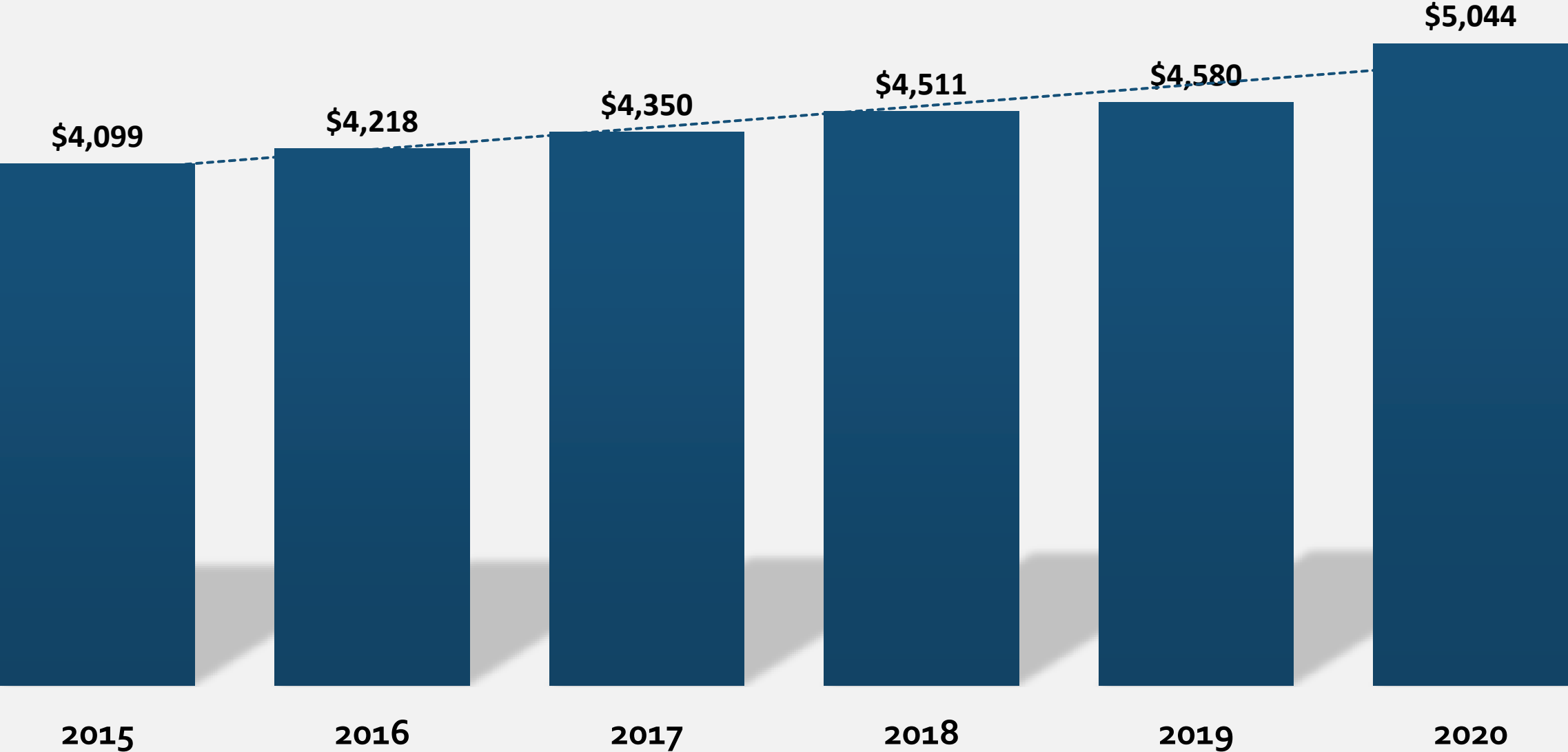
Federal Funding Requirements

Through a Cooperative Agreement between the County of Lehigh and the Pennsylvania Bureau of Child Support Enforcement, the Domestic Relations Section is required to provide child support services as outlined in Title IV-D of the Social Security Act.

In order for the Domestic Relations Section to receive federal funding of 66% for all operating expenses, the child support services must be performed in accordance with the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure and the United States Code of Federal Regulations.

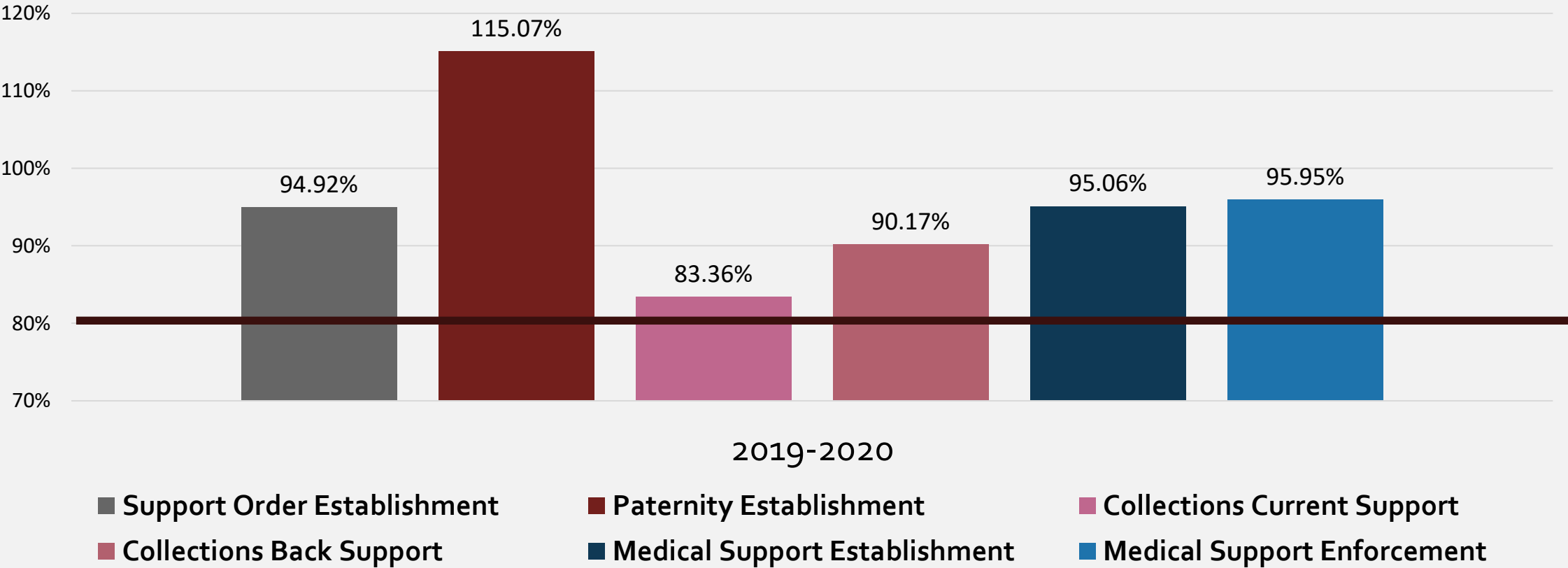
- **In order to maximize federal incentive funding for Pennsylvania and Lehigh County, the Domestic Relations Section is required to meet federal performance standards of at least 80% in the following categories:**
- Cases with support orders established
- Cases with paternity established
- Cases with full monthly collection of current support
- Cases with a payment on back support in the federal fiscal year
- Cases with medical support established (not tied to funding)
- Cases with medical support enforced (not tied to funding)

Average Collections per Support Case



2019-2020 Federal Performance Indicators

For the 2020 Federal Fiscal Year, which ended on September 30, 2020, the Domestic Relations Section exceeded 80% in all the Federal Performance Standards. The DRS routinely exceeds ALL performance standards every year in each category.



Judicial & Administrative Enforcement of Support Orders

Conference Officers are responsible for conducting contempt conferences with delinquent defendants in an effort to gain compliance with the support order.

If the defendant is habitually noncompliant with the support order, the defendant may be scheduled for a contempt hearing before a judge for consideration of incarceration or other appropriate sanctions.

- In addition, the following judicial and administrative enforcement actions may be initiated:
 - Federal and State Tax Refund Intercept
 - Lottery Winnings Intercept
 - Freeze/Seize of Financial Assets
 - Real Property Liens
 - Credit Bureau Reporting
 - Passport Denial
 - Driver's License Suspension
 - Recreational License Suspension
 - Professional/Occupational License Suspension
 - Bench Warrants/Body Attachments
 - Work Search Program
 - Incarceration with Purge Conditions/ Work Release

ADULT PROBATION

PROVIDING COMMUNITY PROTECTION
THROUGH OFFENDER SUPERVISION



Adult Probation Mission, Philosophy, & Primary Goal

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.

The primary goal of the Lehigh County Adult Probation Department is to provide protection to the community. The Department, led by Chief Adult Probation Officer Mark Surovy, works to achieve its goal through appropriate and relevant supervision and treatment of offenders by trained probation officers.

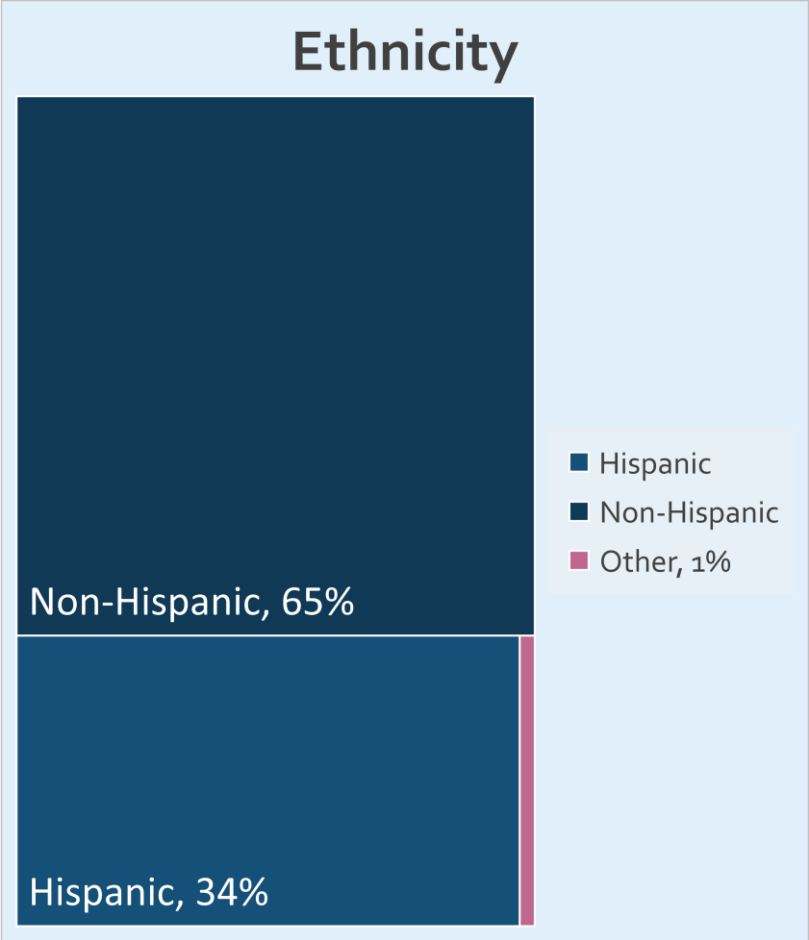
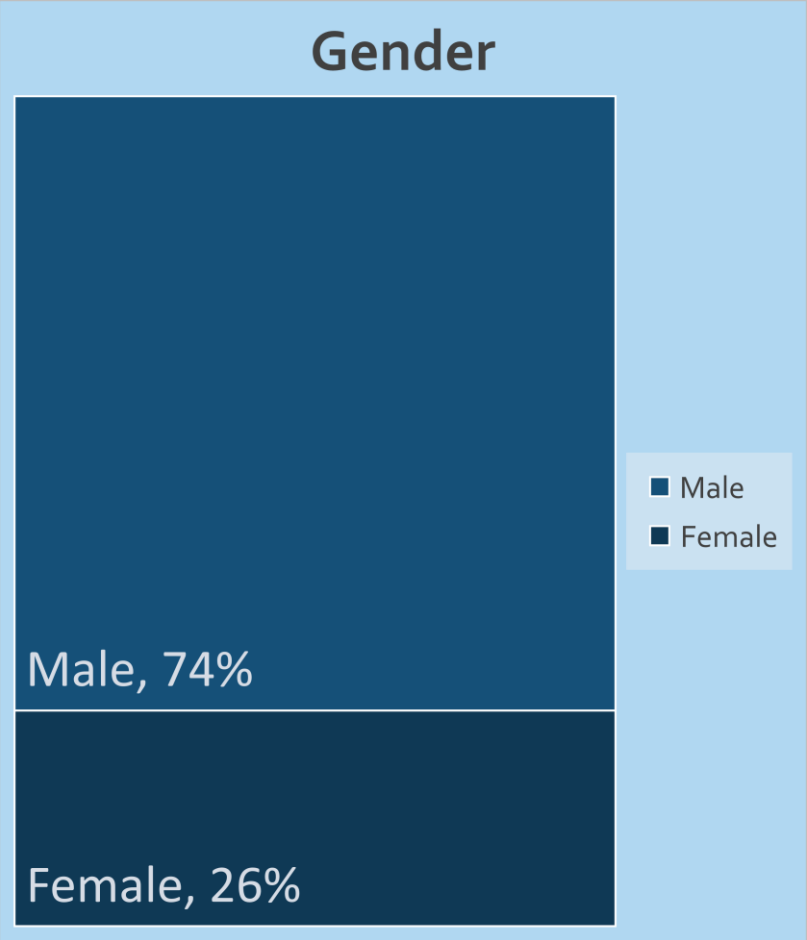
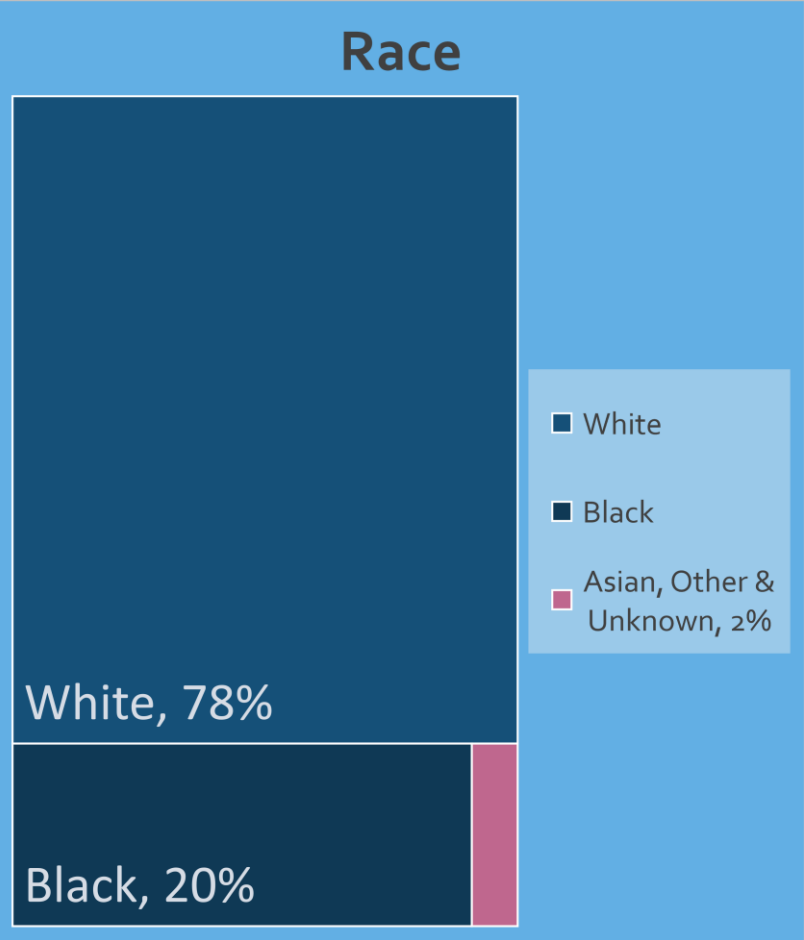
The Department recognizes that offenders can change negative behavior patterns if they are afforded the appropriate supervision and restorative programs to help them in the rehabilitation process. The offender must, however, desire to change the inappropriate behavior and be willing to work with the probation officer to effectuate change. When an offender fails to comply with rules and conditions and where the community's safety is in jeopardy, the offender is removed from community supervision and remanded to jail.

The Department is audited annually by the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole and continues to be in compliance with standards promulgated by the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections.

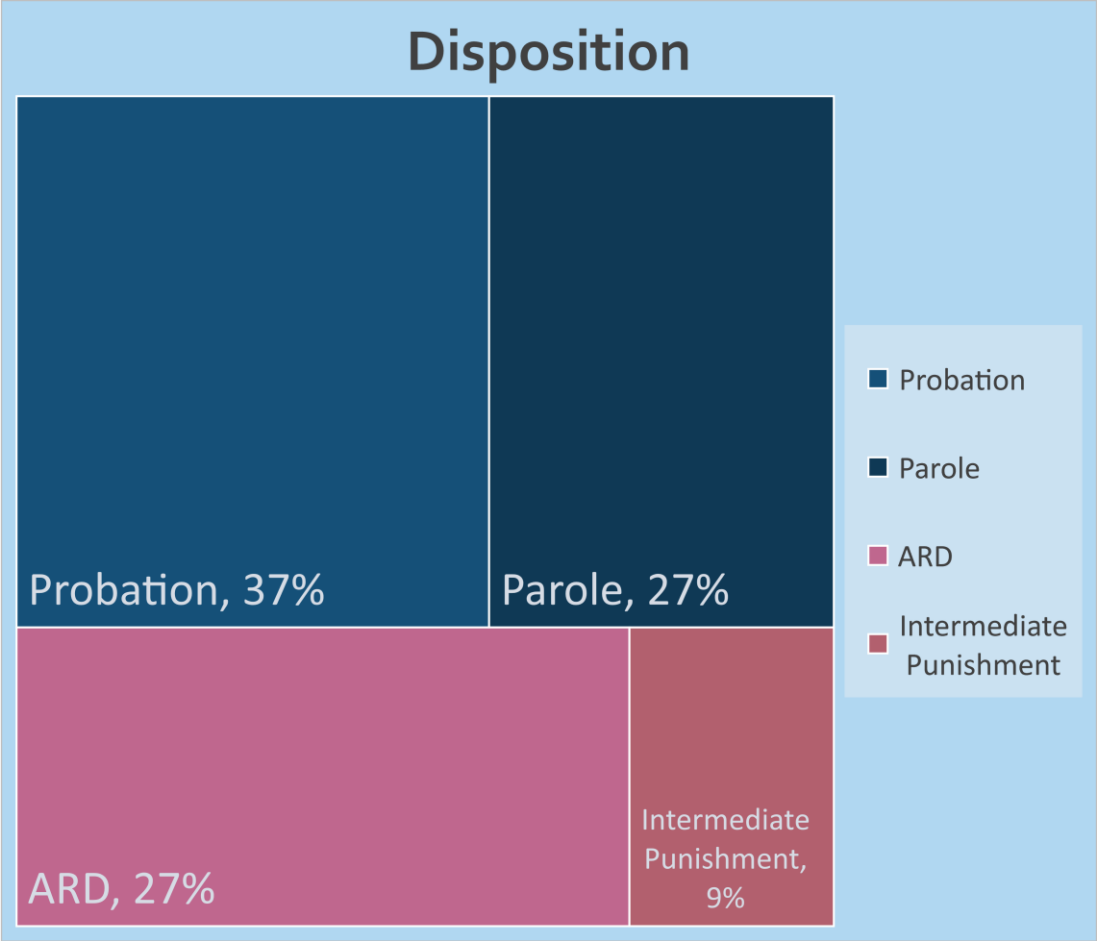
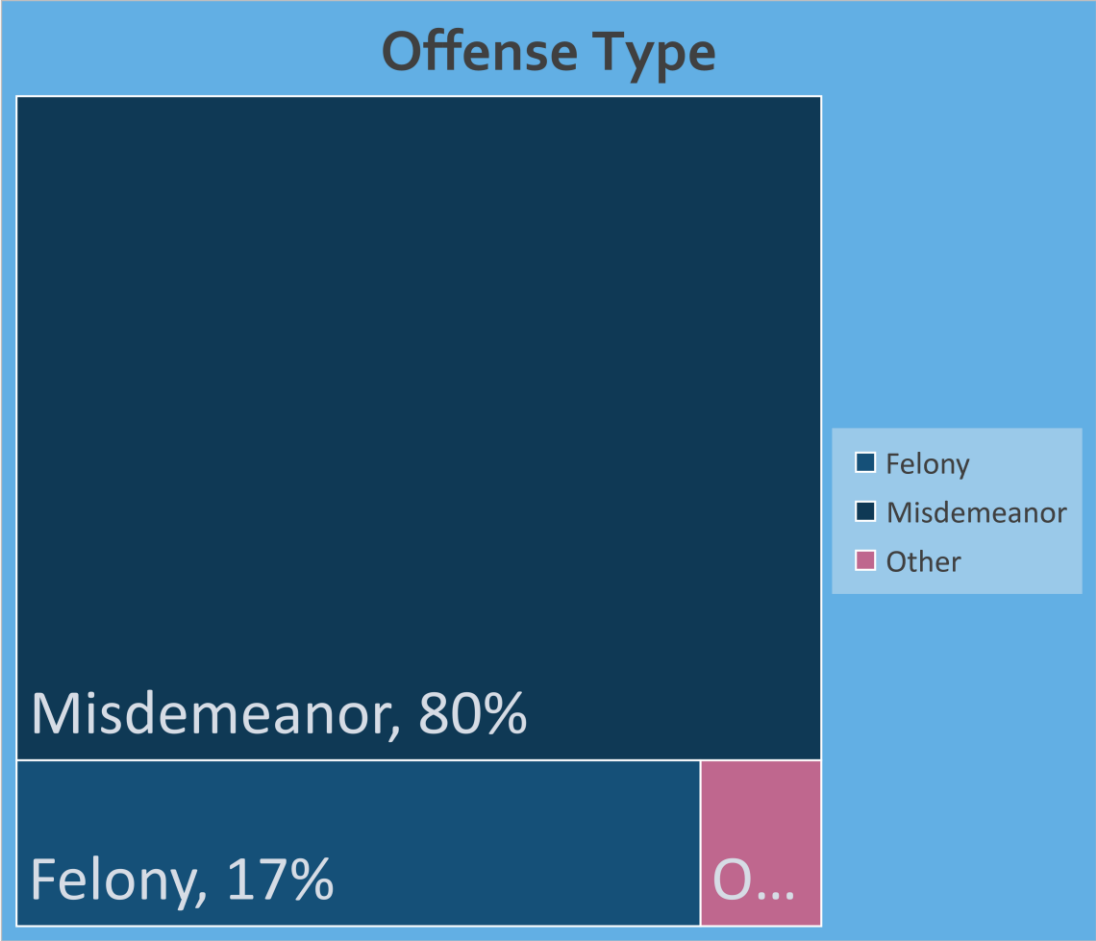
Adult Probation Offender to Staff Comparison 2020



Adult Probation Client Profile 2020



Adult Probation Client Profile 2020



Adult Probation Functional Units 2020



1,048

Court Reporting
Network
Evaluations
Completed

859

Pre-Parole
Investigations
Completed

311

Offenders
Completing
Alcohol Safe
Driving School*

181

Pre-Sentence
Investigations
Completed

Adult Probation 2020

*Alcohol Safe Driving School Classes were placed on hold from April 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 due to COVID-19.

Adult Probation Programs & Projects 2020

SPORE

Intensive
Supervision

In-House Drug
Testing
Program

Outmate

Specialty Drug
Court

Competency/
Accountability
Programs

Prevention
Through Anti-
Violence Education
(PAVE)

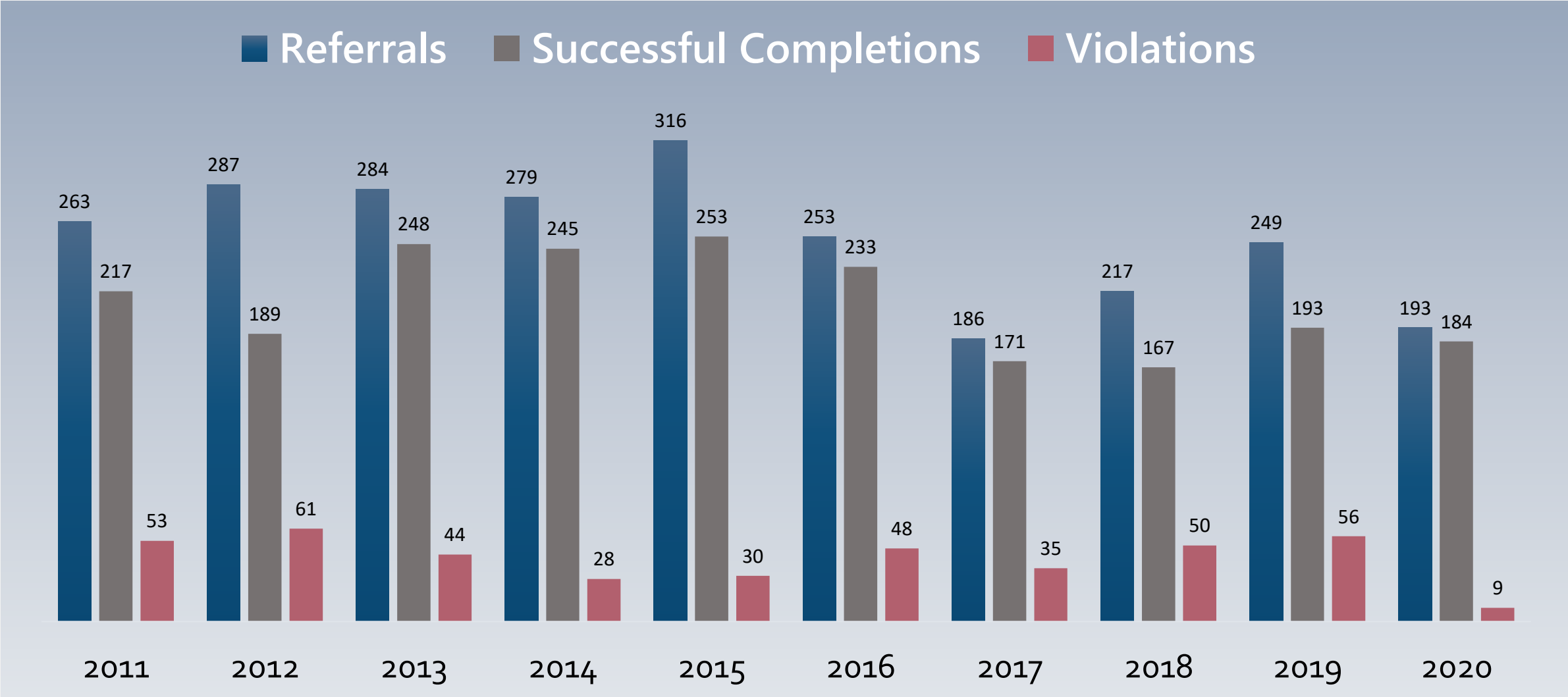
Electronic
Monitoring

Treatment
Continuum
Alternative Project
(TCAP)

Alcohol Highway
Safety Project

Community Work
Service Project

Adult Probation Electronic Monitoring

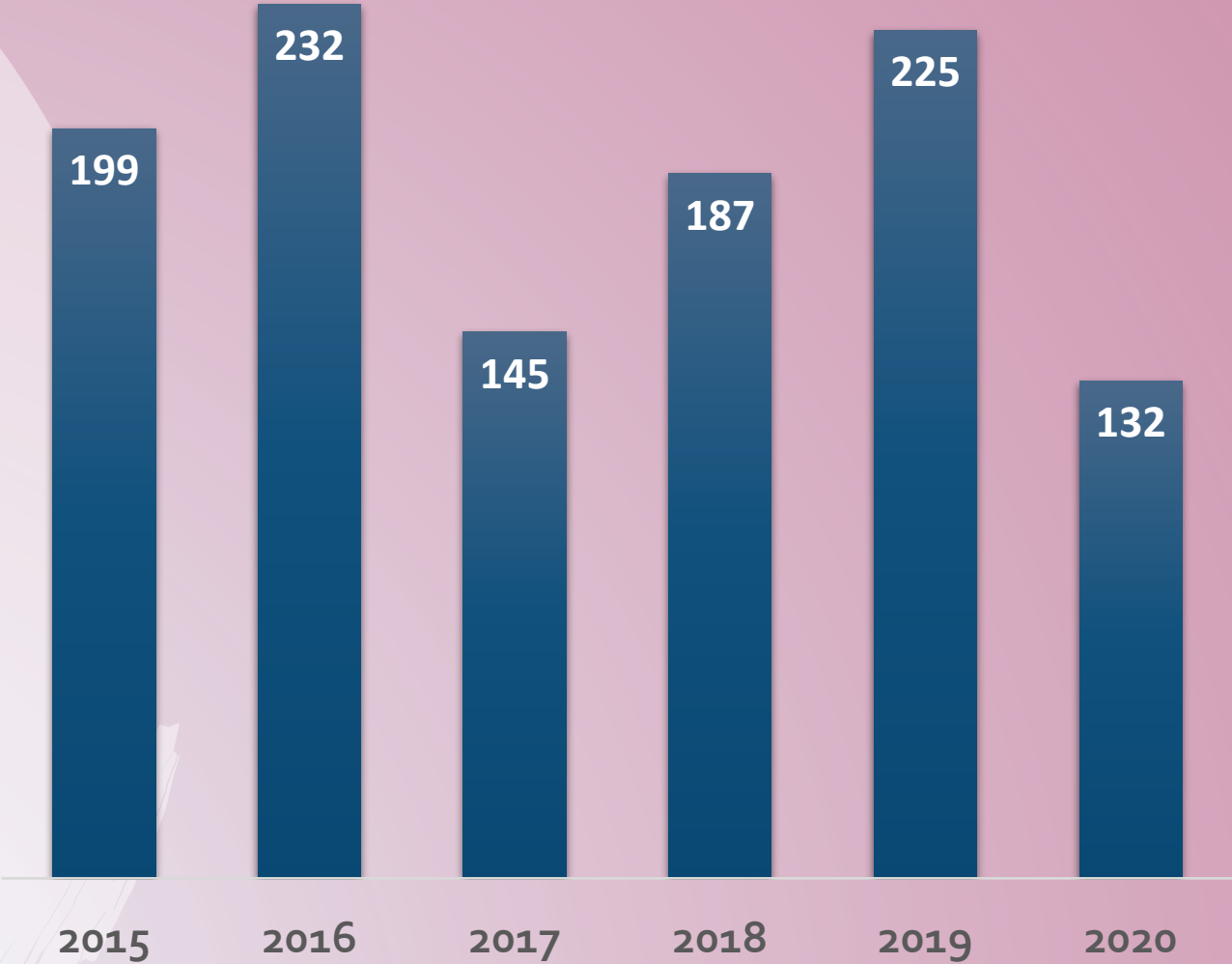


Adult Probation SPORE

Special Program for Offenders in Rehabilitation and Education (SPORE) provides services for mentally ill offenders. Adult Probation Officers and Mental Health Caseworkers jointly supervise offenders on intensive and maximum supervision levels. A psychiatrist and psychologist are available for evaluations.

During 2020, SPORE received 132 formal referrals and 45 evaluations were completed.

SPORE Referrals



JUVENILE PROBATION

PROVIDING A BALANCED APPROACH TO
JUVENILE JUSTICE



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 and restorative justice principles, in order to build competencies, reduce risk to reoffend, restore victims, protect the community and assist in promoting long term behavior change.

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 Kevin Miller, is responsible to the court and the community for delivering necessary and appropriate services to those juveniles referred to the department.

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.

Juvenile Probation

A BALANCED APPROACH

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.

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.

Competency Development: The department assesses each youth to determine how they can best become productive and responsible citizens. This is the 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."

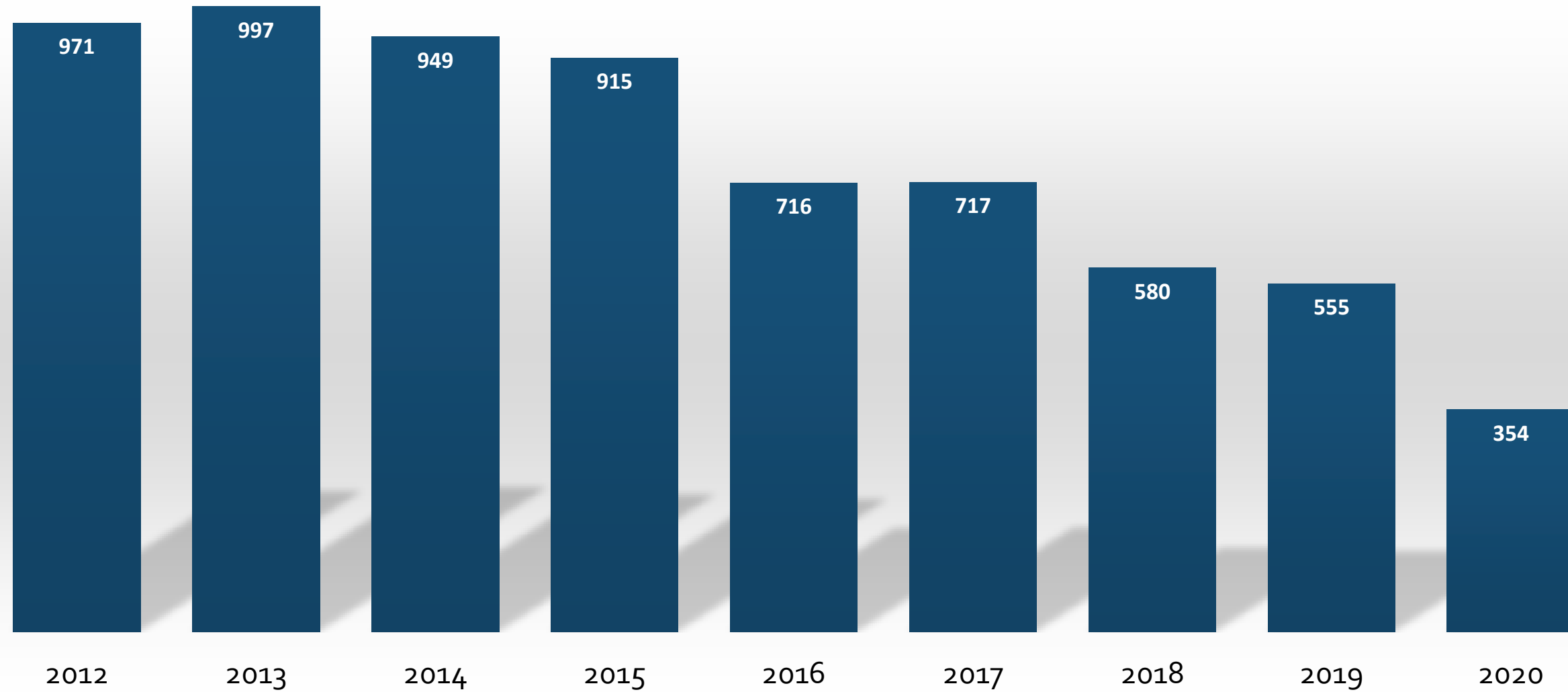


Juvenile Probation

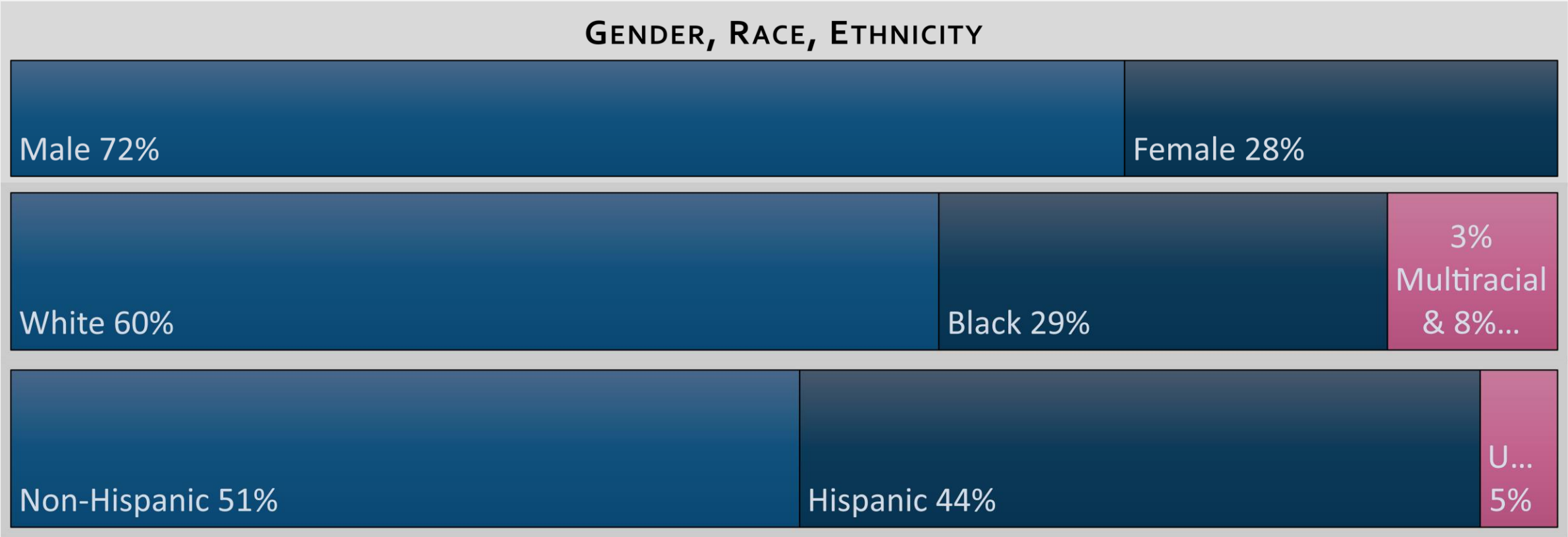
Departmental Divisions

ADMINISTRATION / MANAGEMENT	INTAKE UNIT (EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT)
	COMMUNITY BASED SUPERVISION
	SPORE (MENTAL HEALTH AND ID)
	PLACEMENT/AFTERCARE UNIT
	COMMUNITY SERVICES UNIT
	VICTIM SERVICES UNIT
	LOW RISK OFFICER
	PROGRAM COORDINATOR
	NON PAYMENT OF COSTS AND FINES UNIT
	QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT
	TRANSPORTATION UNIT
	FISCAL UNIT
	SUPPORT STAFF
	MANAGEMENT UNIT

Youth Under Supervision 2012 to 2020

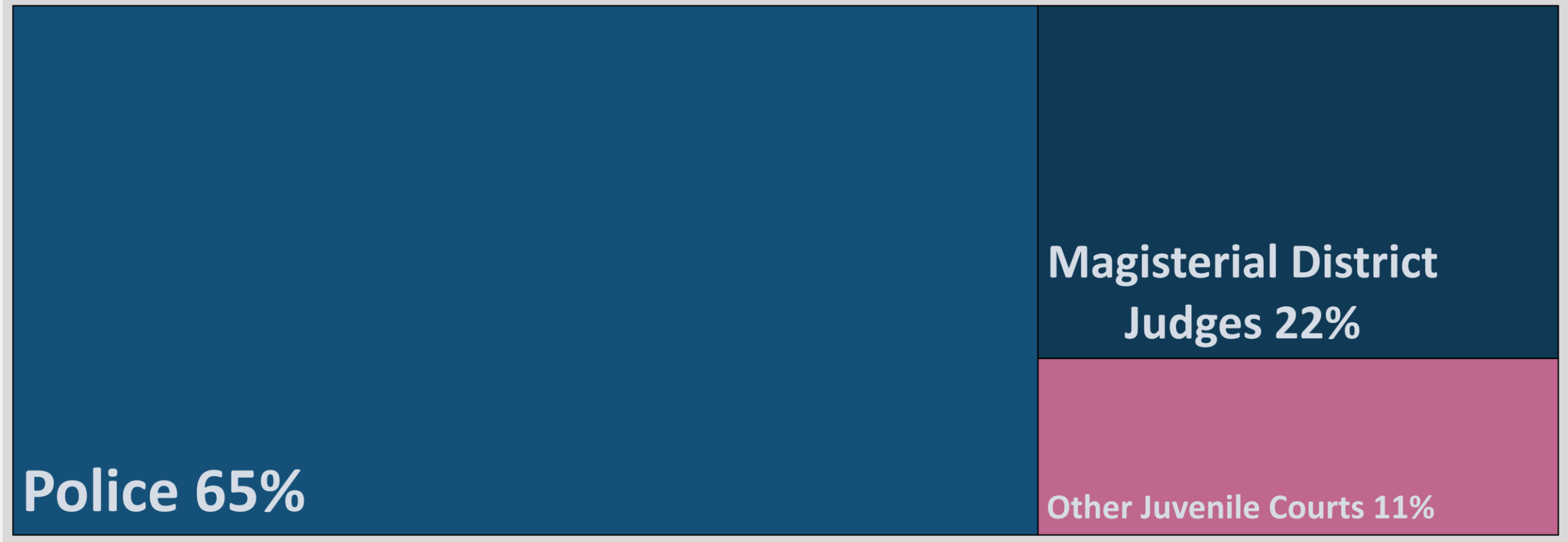


Juvenile Probation Client Profile 2020



Juvenile Probation

ALLEGATIONS RECEIVED BY:



Each referral/written allegation may include multiple “cases” which may result in multiple dispositions per allegation. The numbers reflected here include our most frequent dispositions, but are not reflective of all our dispositions.

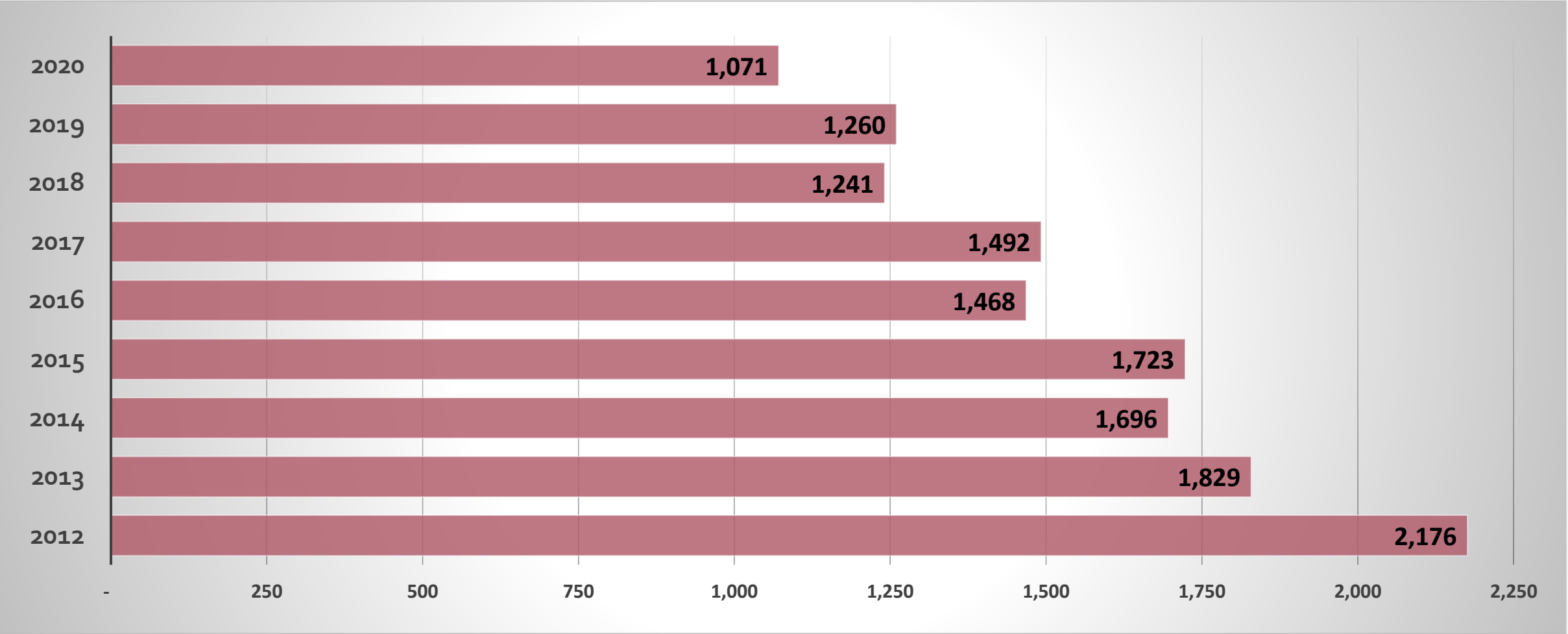
Juvenile Probation Primary Dispositions

While referrals have been relatively flat for the past few years, complex issues within cases have increased significantly requiring more collaboration with system partners and heightened attention to the dynamics of the case. Heightened attention is also required for sex offender supervision. The use of drugs among youth, and gang activity, remain a concern for our probation officers and require an increased level of supervision. 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.

Year	Referrals/ Written Allegations	Informal Adjustment	Consent Decree	Probation	Placement
2020	428	15	97	109	54
2019	839	28	125	162	78
2018	798	28	124	157	77
2017	958	29	160	231	86
2016	967	49	140	319	96
2015	1,268	62	160	325	118
2014	1,293	78	148	338	190
2013	1,175	61	175	305	221
2012	1,239	161	189	393	214
2011	1,475	259	184	479	209

Starting with 2015, the Placement data does not include Drug and Alcohol and Mental Health placements that were not court commitments.

Number of Juvenile Cases Disposed



Probation and placement dispositions can be counted more than once for the same juvenile as they represent each “case.”

Juvenile Probation Incarcerated Youth 2014 to Present

This chart reflects the number of youth that were direct filed or transferred to adult court since 2014.

Direct filed cases include offenses that are not included in the definition of a “delinquent act.” Offenses such as murder, and other severe offenses (for juveniles 15 years or older) are included.

In these instances, youth can be automatically charged as an adult per section 42 Pa.C.S.A. § 6302 of the Juvenile Act.

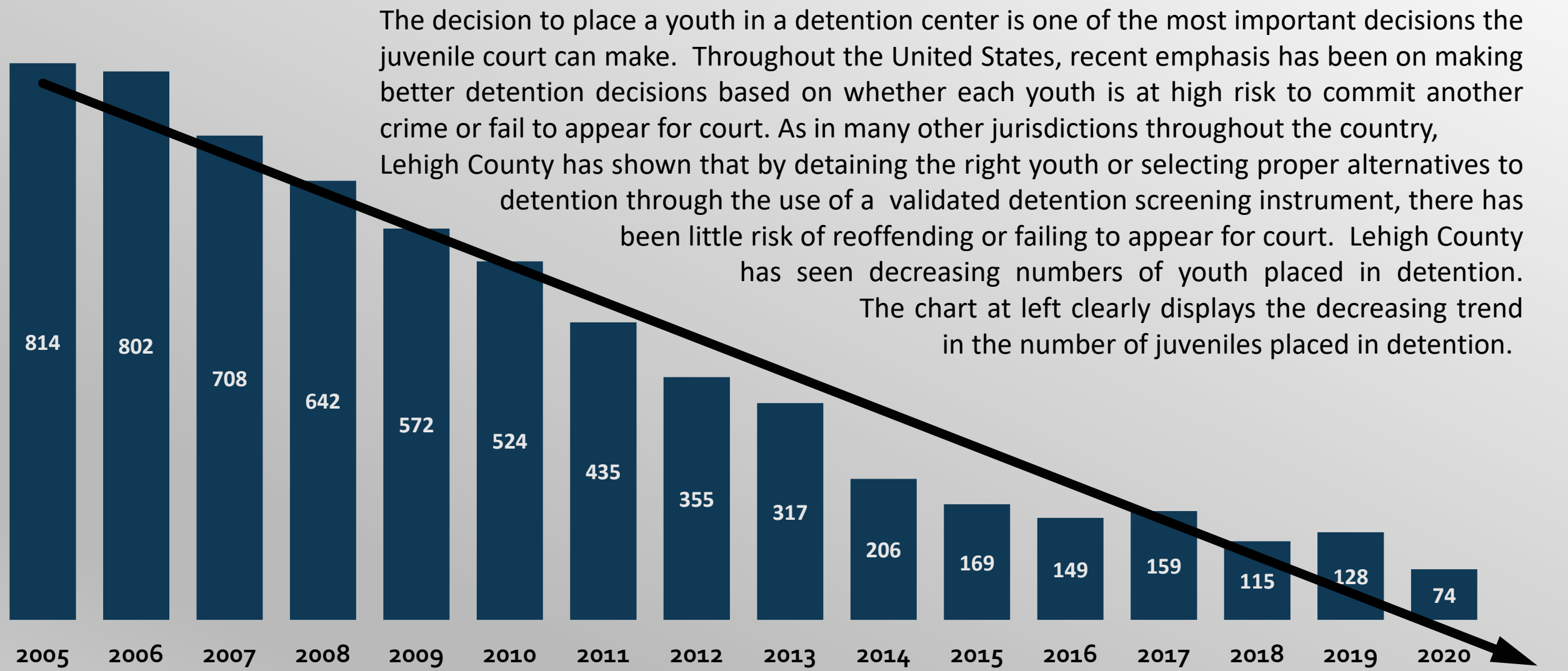
Youth transferred to adult court are cases petitioned to juvenile court; however, the court finds that the juvenile system is not appropriate for the particular case.

Youth must be 14 or older at the time of the offense and the court must find that a felony crime occurred. Furthermore, there must be reasonable grounds to believe the public interest would be best served by having the case sent to criminal court.

A youth can also request that the case be transferred to criminal court.

	Total	Sentenced in Adult Court	De- Certified	Other/ Pending
Direct File Youth	52	36	10	1
Youth Transferred to Adult Court	9			

Juvenile Probation Detention Trends 2005-2020



The decision to place a youth in a detention center is one of the most important decisions the juvenile court can make. Throughout the United States, recent emphasis has been on making better detention decisions based on whether each youth is at high risk to commit another crime or fail to appear for court. As in many other jurisdictions throughout the country, Lehigh County has shown that by detaining the right youth or selecting proper alternatives to detention through the use of a validated detention screening instrument, there has been little risk of reoffending or failing to appear for court. Lehigh County has seen decreasing numbers of youth placed in detention. The chart at left clearly displays the decreasing trend in the number of juveniles placed in detention.

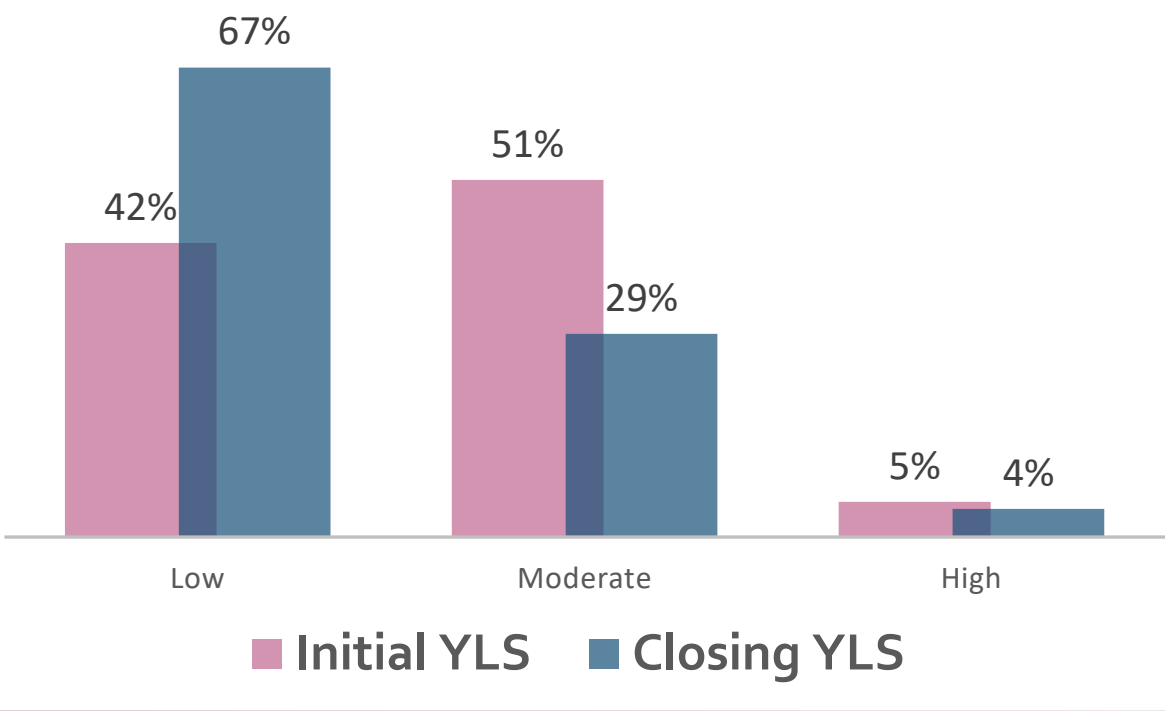
Outcomes on 290 Juvenile Probation Cases Closed in 2020

Probation officers are required to report outcome measures whenever they release a juvenile from probation supervision. These outcomes measure activities while under supervision.

Juveniles who completed a community service obligation in full	94%
Juveniles in school or employed at case closing	94.8%
Juveniles who paid their restitution in full	81.8%
Juveniles who successfully completed supervision without a new offense resulting in a Consent Decree, Adjudication of Delinquency, ARD, Nolo Contendere, or finding of guilt in a criminal proceeding	88.6%
Juveniles with no judicial finding of technical violations of probation while under supervision	85.8%
Juveniles committed to placement (28 days or longer)	17.9%
Completion rate of juveniles ordered to Victim Awareness Curriculum	98.4%

Juvenile Probation: Risk/Needs Assessment

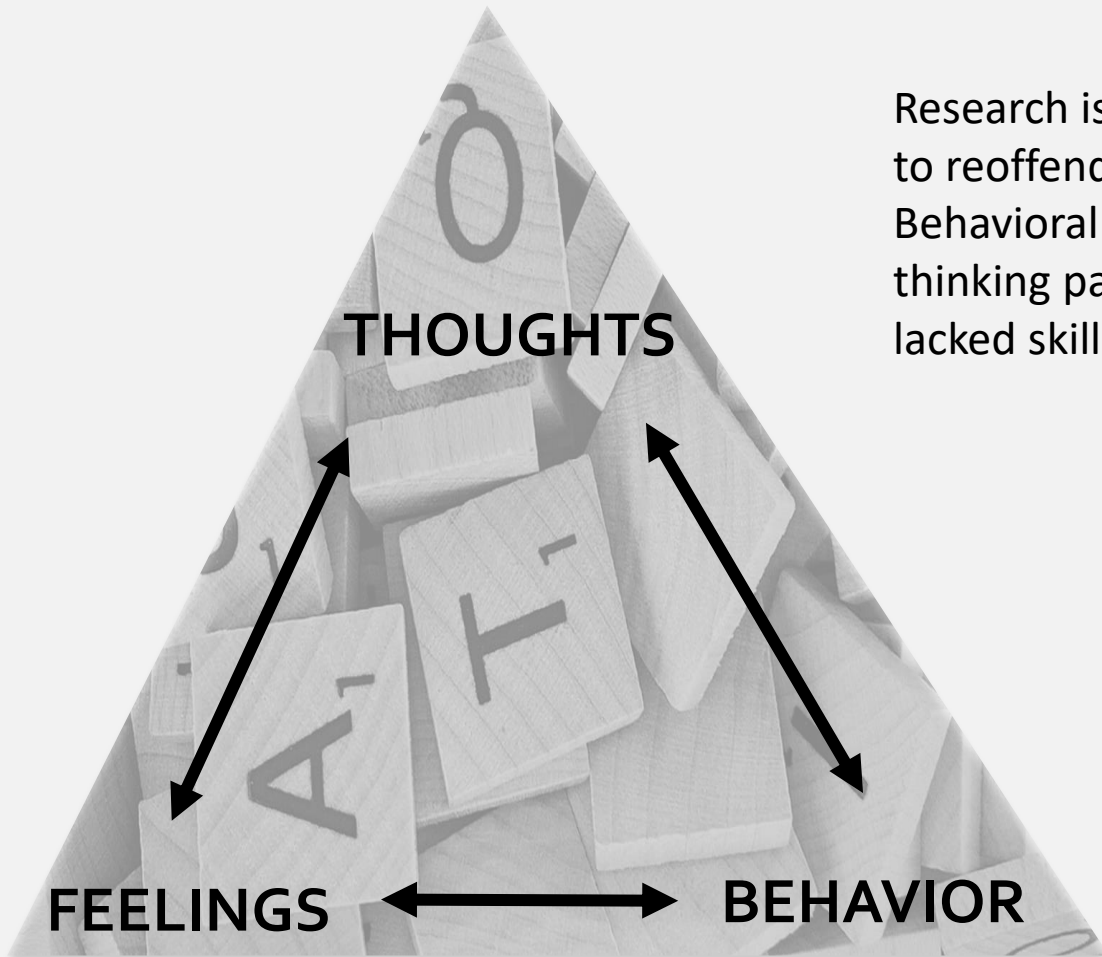
Initial YLS Assessments vs. Closing YLS Assessments



The Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory 2.0 (YLS/CMI 2.0™) is a gender and culturally informed, strengths-based risk/needs assessment tool that reliably and accurately classifies and predicts **re-offending** within juvenile populations. The juvenile probation department has administered the YLS since 2009.

The chart at left compares the initial YLS assessments to the assessments done at time of case closing. This information shows the change in risk level from the onset of supervision to the time supervision ends. As can be seen, in 2020, the percentage of youth who scored low at the time of case closing increased from 42% to 67%.

Juvenile Probation Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions



Research is clear that the most effective interventions in reducing risk to reoffend are cognitive-behavioral interventions. Cognitive-Behavioral interventions assist to identify and restructure negative thinking patterns, and help build, practice, and utilize previously lacked skills that are linked to re-offending behavior.

Lehigh County utilizes a wide range of both cognitive-behavioral and educational interventions to tailor an individual plan for each juvenile under supervision.

These programs and initiatives are listed on the next page.

Juvenile Probation Programs & Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Initiatives

Crossroads	Young Offenders Program	Evening Reporting Center	College Mentoring	Community Work Service Program	Case Planning	Motivational Interviewing
CHOICES	Family Engagement	Retail Theft & Underage Drinking Programs	Young Artist Program	Thinking for a Change	Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS)	YLS/CMI & Other Screening & Assessments
Skill Building & Cognitive Based Interventions	Drug Awareness & Prevention Program (DAPP)	Aggression Replacement Training		Forward Thinking Journaling	Victim Awareness Curriculum	Graduated Responses

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURT

PROVIDING THE FIRST LEVEL OF
PENNSYLVANIA'S JUDICIARY



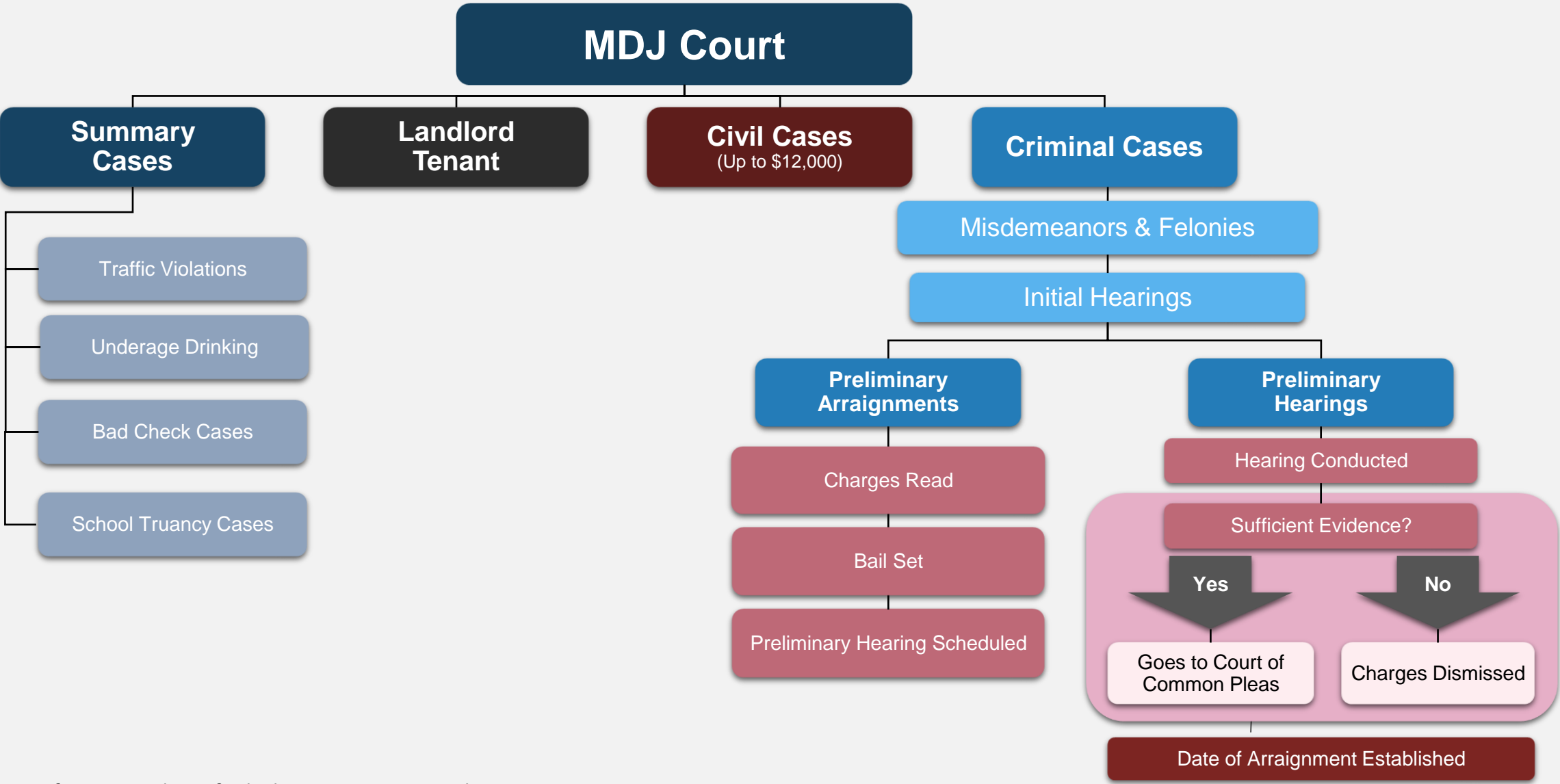
Magisterial District Judges 2020

The Lehigh County Magisterial District Court consists of 14 District Court offices, Night Court and Central Court. The supervision of each District Court is the responsibility of the elected Magisterial District Judge, a state employee. Other Magisterial District Court office employees are Lehigh County judicial employees.

The personnel and administrative functions for the Magisterial District Courts are the responsibility of District Judge Administrator, Carolynn Perry.

31-1-01	Patricia M. Engler
31-1-02	Rashid O. Santiago
31-1-03	Ronald S. Manescu
31-1-04	David M. Howells, Jr.
31-1-05	Michael D. D'Amore
31-1-06	Vacant
31-1-07	Todd P. Heffelfinger
31-1-08	Michael J. Pochron
31-2-01	Karen C. Devine
31-2-02	Jacob E. Hammond
31-2-03	Vacant
31-3-01	Thomas Creighton
31-3-02	Michael J. Faulkner
31-3-03	Daniel C. Trexler

Jurisdiction of the MDJ Court



MDJ Court Filings 2020

53,598



Summary
Traffic
Cases

4,853



Criminal
Cases

4,472



Civil Cases
& Landlord/
Tenant
Cases

4,408



Summary
Non-Traffic
Cases

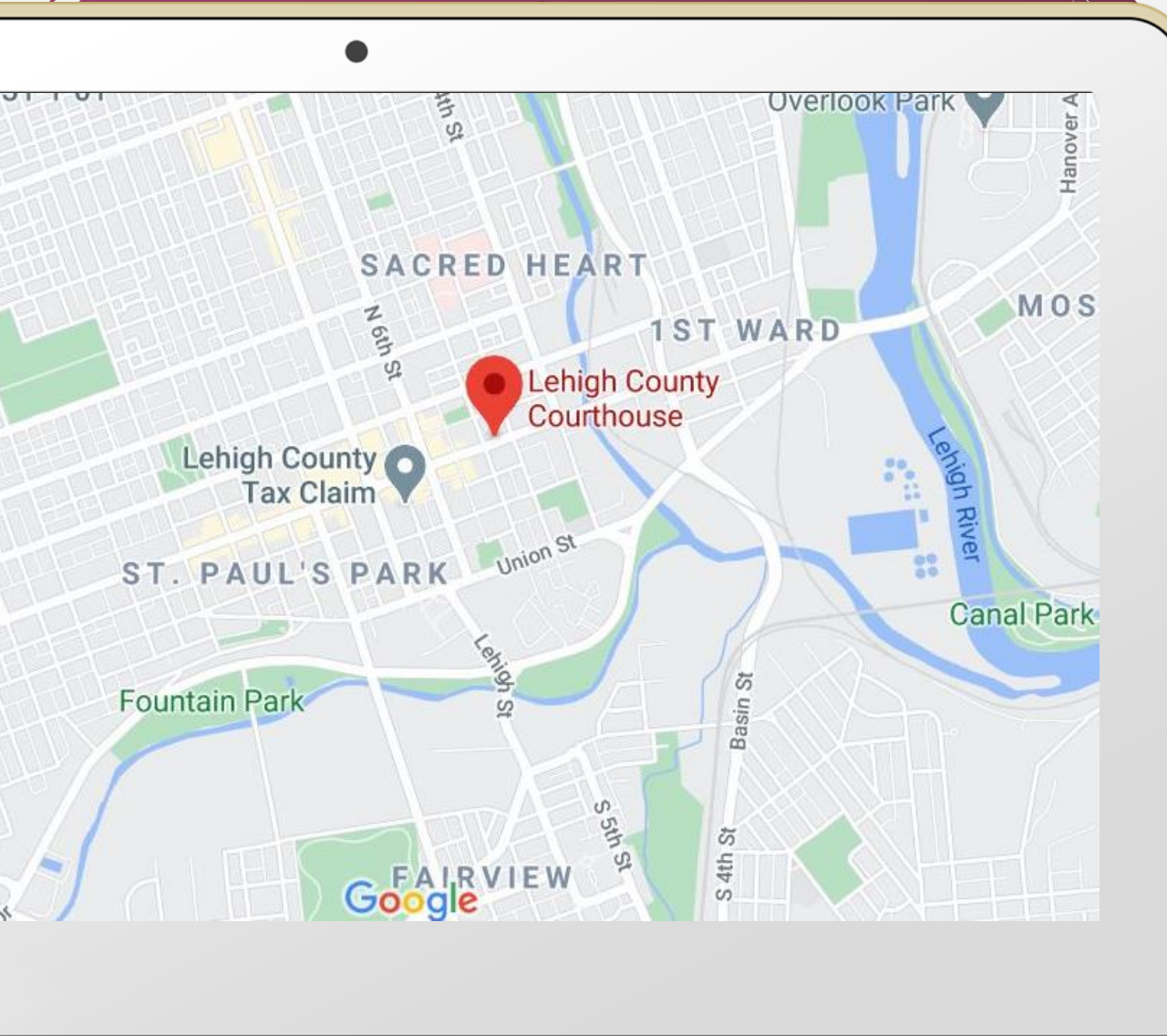
Special MDJ Courts

CENTRAL COURT

- ✱ Preliminary Hearings for all Incarcerated Defendants
- ✱ Located within the Lehigh County Courthouse
- ✱ 14 MDJs preside on a rotating schedule
- ✱ DUI Court two days per month

NIGHT COURT

- ⌋ Preliminary Arraignments for Arrests made after Courthouse hours
- ⌋ Bail Payments
- ⌋ Emergency PFA Orders
- ⌋ Constable Warrant Matters



Contact Court Administration

Court of Common Pleas of Lehigh County
455 W. Hamilton Street
Allentown, PA 18101
Telephone: 610-782-3014
www.lccpa.org