

SUPREME COURT OF MISSISSIPPI

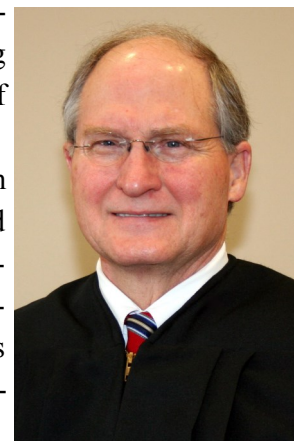
2016 Annual Report



A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF JUSTICE WILLIAM L. WALLER, JR.

The Mississippi Judiciary began the calendar year 2016 with an appropriation reduction resulting in spending reductions and restrictions on out-of-state travel. We are committed to being good stewards of funding appropriated to the courts. Adequately funding the effective operation of the judicial branch of government is essential.

The Supreme Court welcomed two new members in early 2016, with Justices Dawn Beam and James D. Maxwell II taking the positions formerly held by former Justices Randy Pierce and Dr. David Chandler. Veteran federal prosecutor James M. Greenlee filled the position Maxwell formerly held on the Court of Appeals. Former Justice Pierce in his new role as director of the Mississippi Judicial College improved judicial training at all levels. Dr. Chandler in his new position as Commissioner of Child Protection Services took on the challenge of ensuring the safety and well-being of abused and neglected children.



Justice Beam, because of her experience as a chancellor in dealing with abused and neglected children, took a leadership role in efforts to address the shortage of foster care families and the growing drug abuse problem that forces children into foster care. Recognizing the difficulty of any one agency to meet all of the needs, she spearheaded efforts to bring about collaboration among state and local agencies, churches and other community resources.

Several new judges joined the trial court bench. Chancellor Rhea Sheldon was appointed February 22, 2016, to the 10th Chancery position formerly held by Justice Beam. Circuit Judge Johnnie E. Walls Jr. retired January 21, 2016. Linda Coleman, a former state Representative, was appointed March 9, 2016, as 11th District Circuit Judge. Circuit Judge Christopher Collins was appointed March 31, 2016, to the 8th Circuit to the position formerly held by Judge Marcus Gordon.

Two icons of the trial bench died. Former Circuit Judge Marcus D. Gordon, 84, of Union, died May 26, 2016, three months after he retired from the bench. At the time of his retirement, Judge Gordon was the longest serving circuit judge in Mississippi, having served the 8th Circuit for 37 years. Retired Chancellor Sebe Dale Jr., 94, of Columbia, died April 5, 2016. He retired December 31, 2010, after 42 years on the bench, 32 of that as chancellor of the 10th Chancery District.

The courts made great strides in electronic filing technology in 2016. Mississippi Electronic Courts implemented e-filing systems in 20 courts, bringing the total of e-filing trial courts to 52. A total of 39 chancery courts and 13 circuit courts were using MEC at the end of December 2016. Work continued to expand the scope of appellate e-filing. As the program grew, MEC worked to redesign the system of data storage to be more cost-efficient so that the judiciary could afford the continued expansion. MEC is self-funded by fees, receiving no general funds. More than 6,200 attorneys and 3,400 non-attorneys were utilizing electronic access at the end of December 2016. The pattern of managed growth emphasized improved user efficiency. MEC has worked to implement a district based system which enables judges and chambers to access records and manage case dockets across the entire court district using one password rather than having to access one county at a time.

Years of study of criminal rules concluded on December 15, 2016, with the Supreme Court's unanimous adoption of the Mississippi Rules of Criminal Procedure. The rules, set to go into effect July 1, 2017, address every aspect of criminal proceedings from arrest through post-trial motions and apply to criminal procedures in Justice, Municipal, County and Circuit Courts.

Justice Ann H. Lamar, chair of the Supreme Court Rules Committee on Criminal Practice and Procedure, led a six-year effort by the court to create the new rules. Their adoption came two weeks before she retired on December 31, 2016. Before the court took up the rules amendments, the Uniform Criminal Rules Study Committee, an independent study group appointed by the Supreme Court, spent more than six years reviewing existing court rules and drafting suggested changes.

William L. Waller, Jr.

Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Mississippi



SUPREME COURT OF MISSISSIPPI
2016 ANNUAL REPORT
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THE MISSISSIPPI JUDICIAL SYSTEM

The Mississippi Judiciary is made up of Justice and Municipal Courts at the most basic level; County, Chancery, and Circuit Courts comprising the trial courts of record; and two appellate courts, the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court, Mississippi's court of last resort.

There are 82 Justice Courts with 197 judges. Justice Courts have jurisdiction over civil actions involving sums of \$3,500 or less and misdemeanors. They also hold preliminary hearings in felony cases. Appeals from the Justice Courts may be taken to Circuit Courts, or County Courts if available, and the cases appealed are tried de novo.

There are 237 Municipal Courts with 259 judges. They have limited criminal jurisdiction and jurisdiction over violations of municipal ordinances. Appeals from the Municipal Courts may be taken to County or Circuit courts, and the cases appealed are tried de novo in the appellate court.

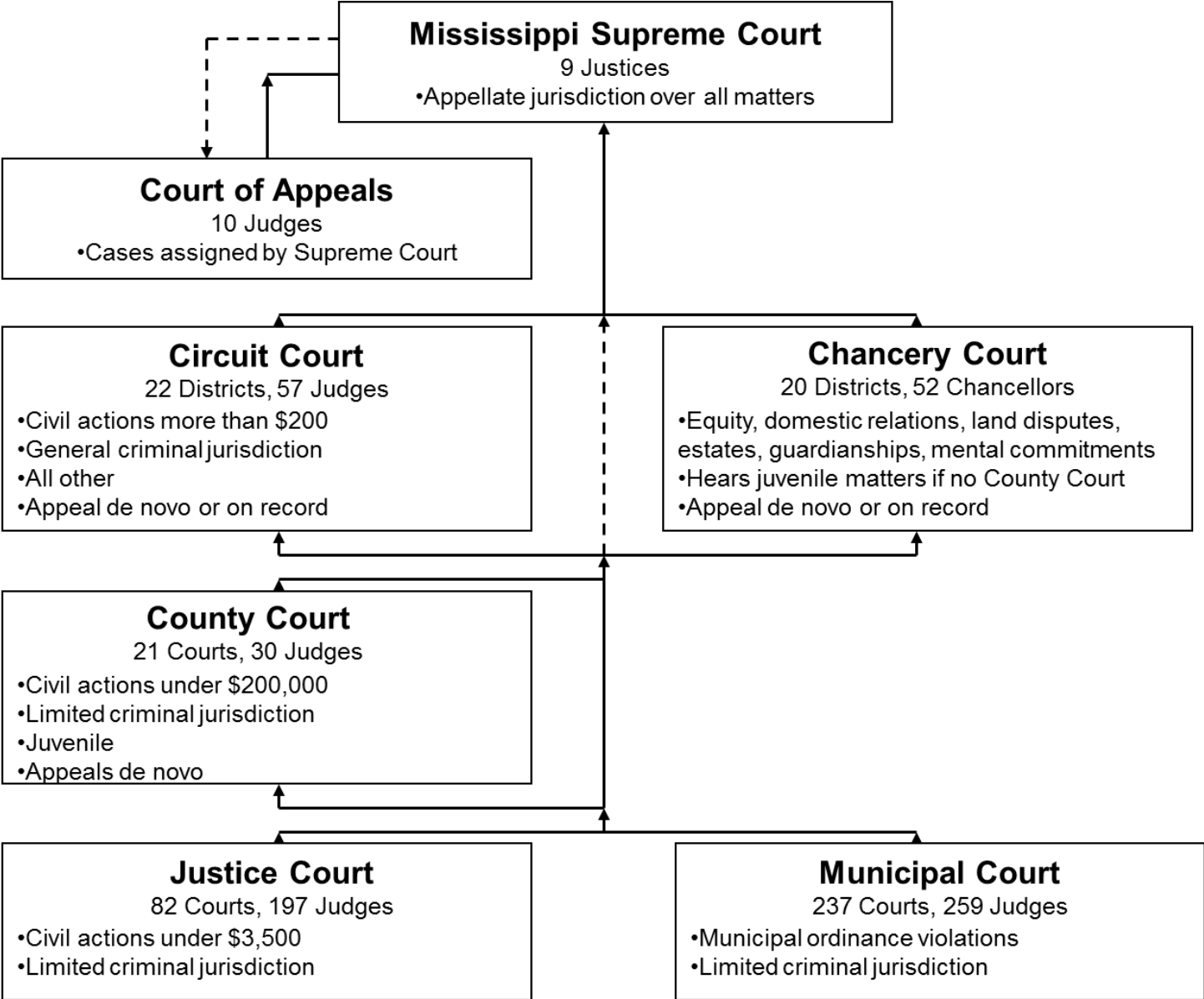
There are 21 County Courts with 30 judges. These courts have concurrent civil jurisdiction with the Chancery and Circuit Courts in suits involving \$200,000 or less. They also have limited criminal jurisdiction and appellate jurisdiction from the Justice Courts and Municipal Courts. In counties with County Courts, the Youth Courts function as a division of the County Courts handling juvenile matters.

There are Chancery Courts in each county, which are organized into 20 districts with 52 chancellors. They have jurisdiction over matters of equity, domestic relations, land disputes, estates, guardianships and mental commitments. In counties without County Courts, the Chancery Courts handle Youth Court functions. They also receive appeals on the record from County Courts in matters over which the two courts have concurrent subject matter jurisdiction.

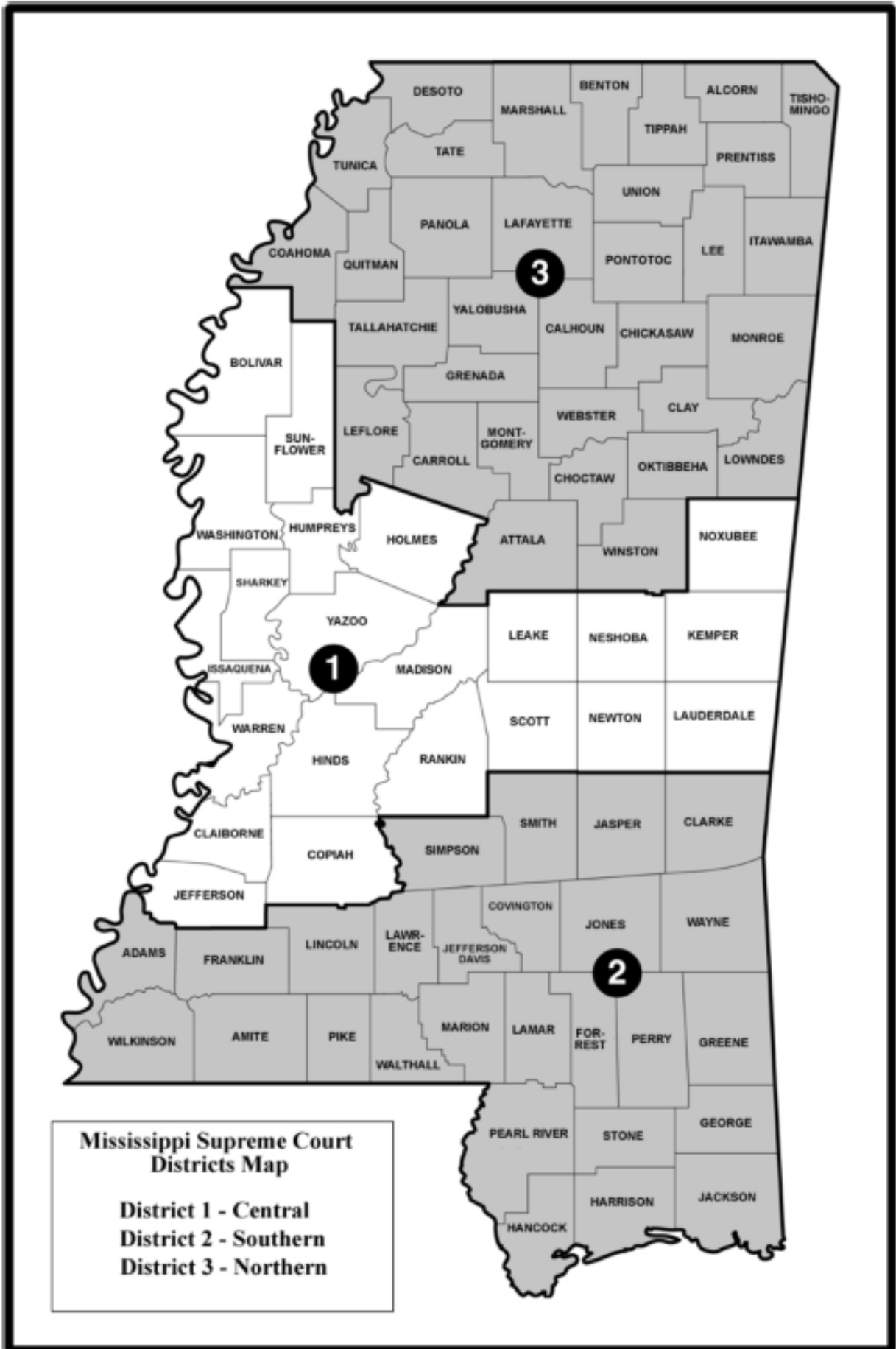
The Circuit Courts are the general jurisdiction trial courts in Mississippi. There are Circuit Courts in each county, organized into 22 districts with 57 judges. They have jurisdiction of all civil actions at law seeking recovery in excess of \$200 and of all criminal cases under state law. They receive appeals de novo from the Justice Courts and on the record from County Courts.

Appeals from the Chancery, Circuit, and, in limited situations, the County Courts are taken to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court may either retain the appeal or assign it to the Court of Appeals. Generally, the Supreme Court retains cases involving issues of first impression and cases involving interpretation of the Constitution, statutes or regulations. There are also a few categories of cases which the Supreme Court retains, such as death penalties, utility rates and annexations. The Court of Appeals typically hears cases in which the issues are ones of error correction, such as whether the judgment is supported by the evidence, or whether the judge correctly ruled on evidentiary challenges. All decisions of the Court of Appeals are subject to discretionary review by the Supreme Court on petition for writ of certiorari. There are nine justices on the Supreme Court and ten judges on the Court of Appeals.

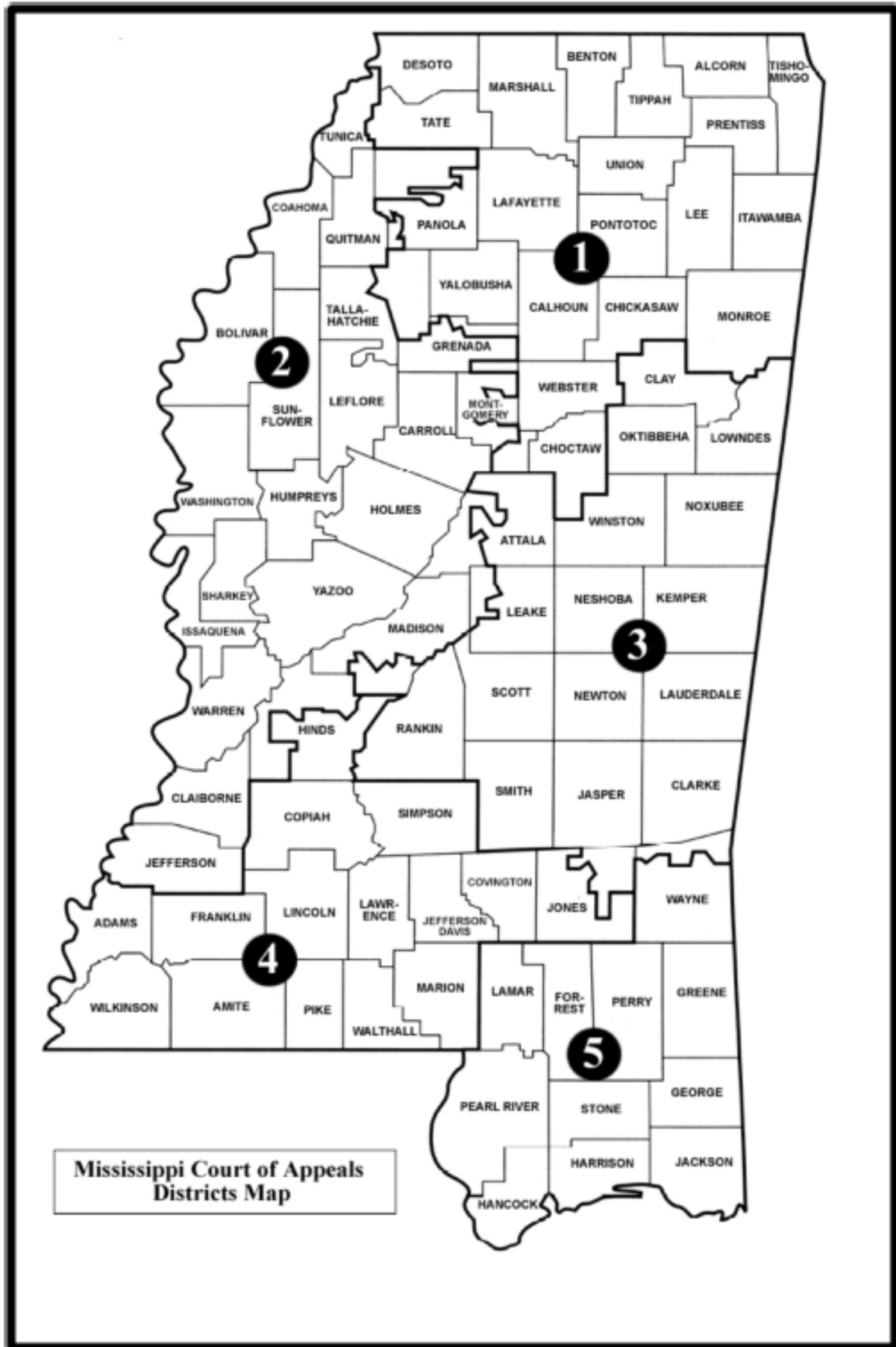
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
of the
MISSISSIPPI JUDICIARY



SUPREME COURT DISTRICTS

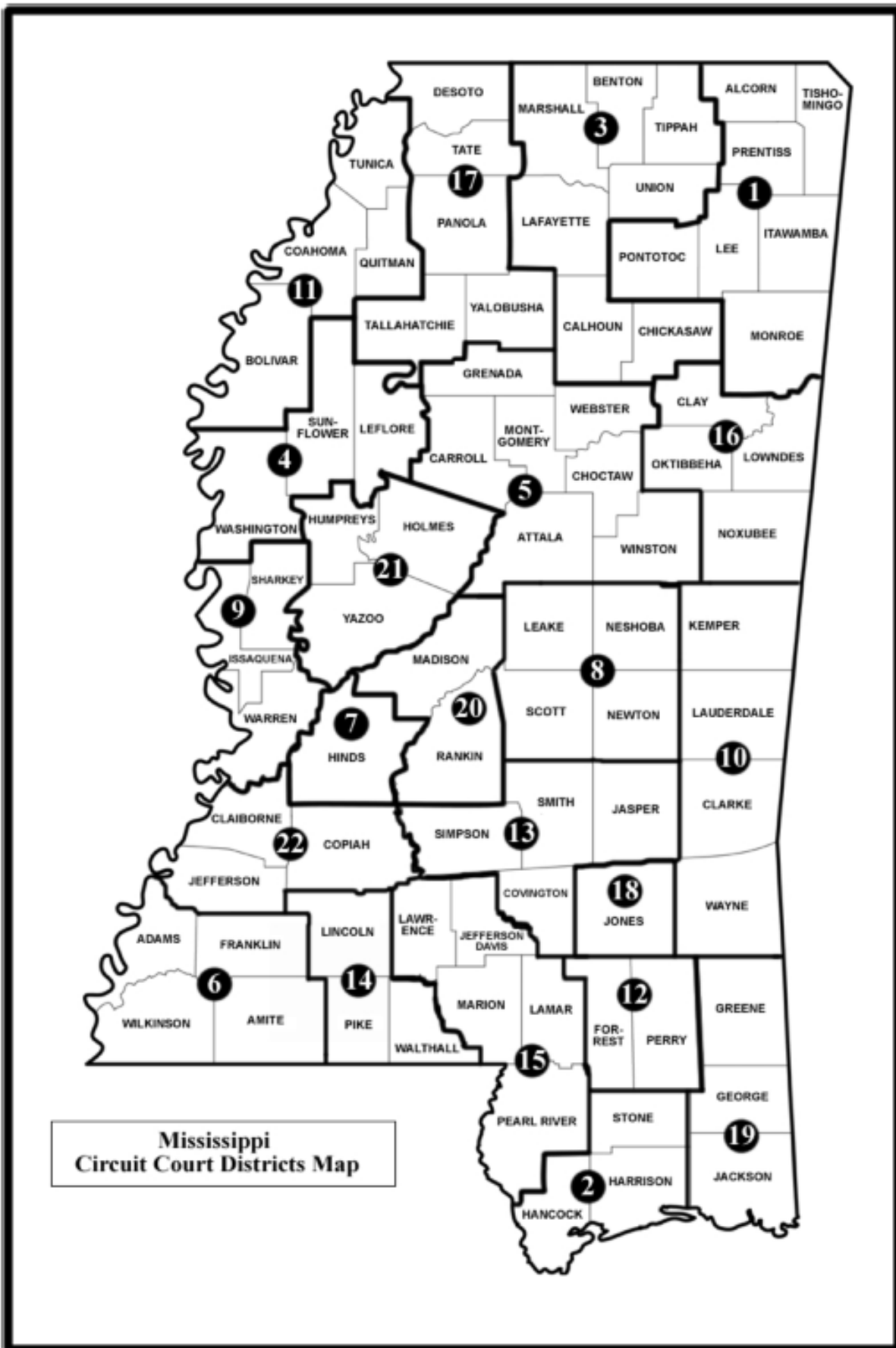


COURT OF APPEALS DISTRICTS

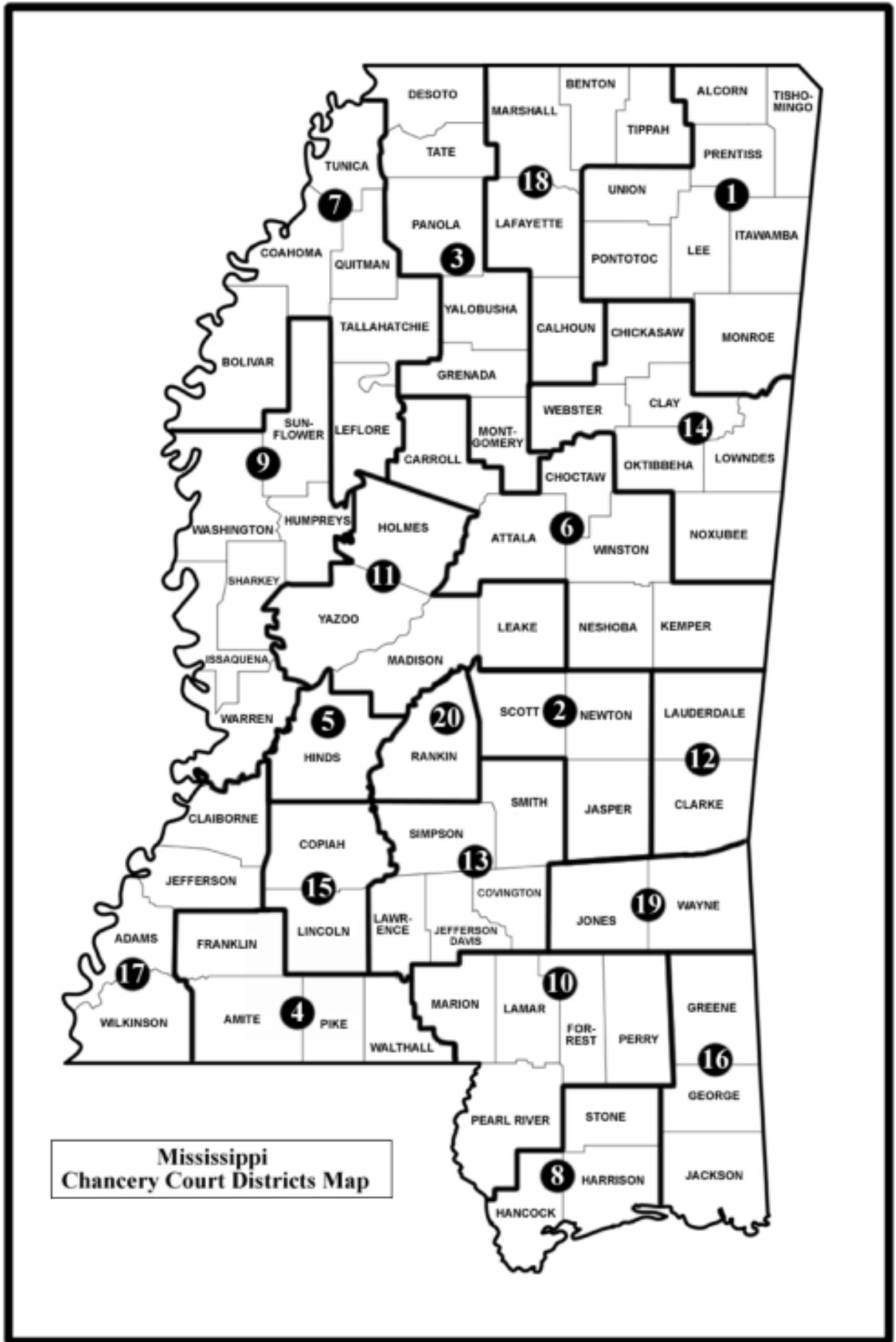


Mississippi Court of Appeals Districts Map

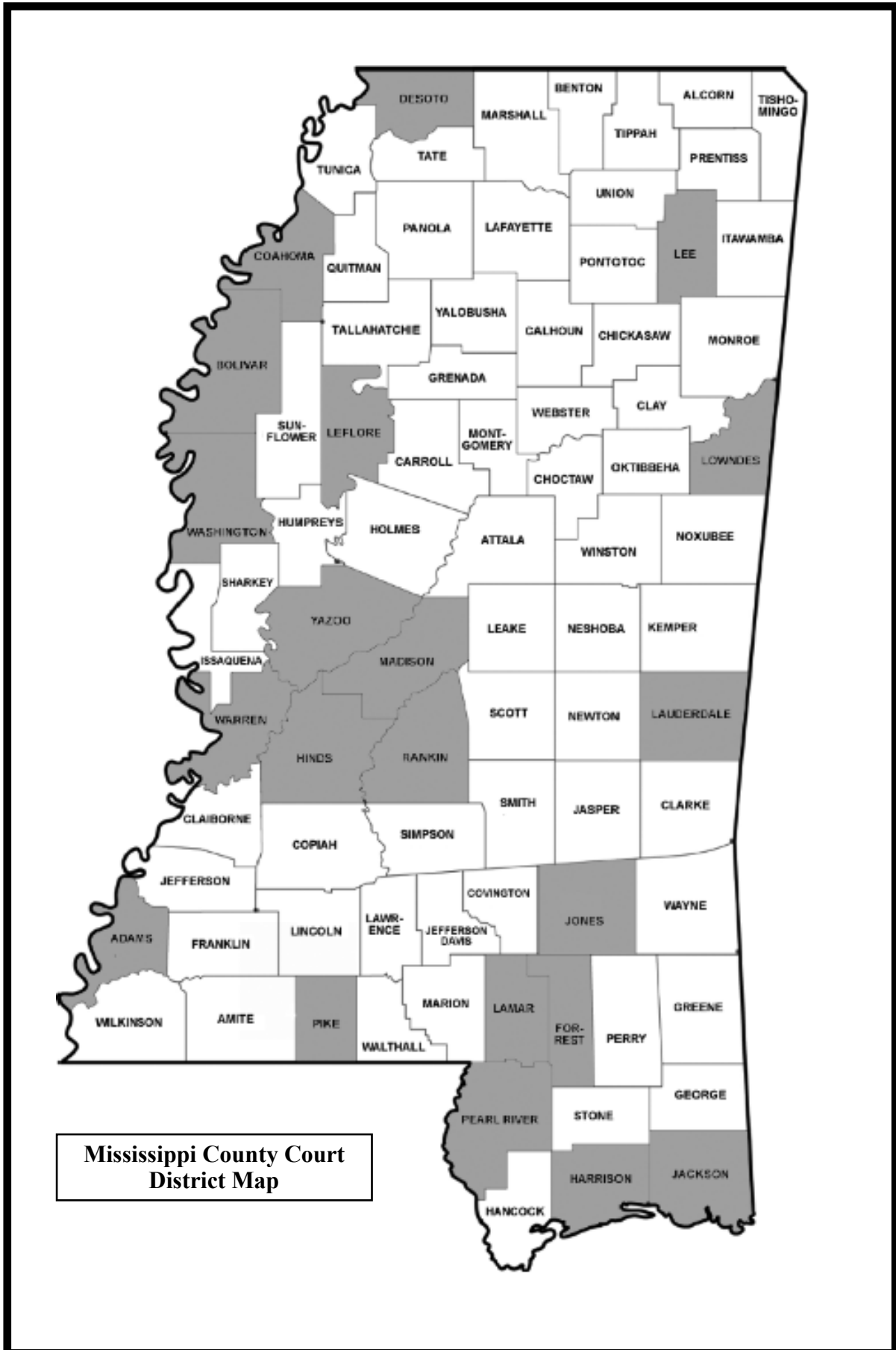
CIRCUIT COURT DISTRICTS



CHANCERY COURT DISTRICTS



COUNTIES WHICH HAVE COUNTY COURTS



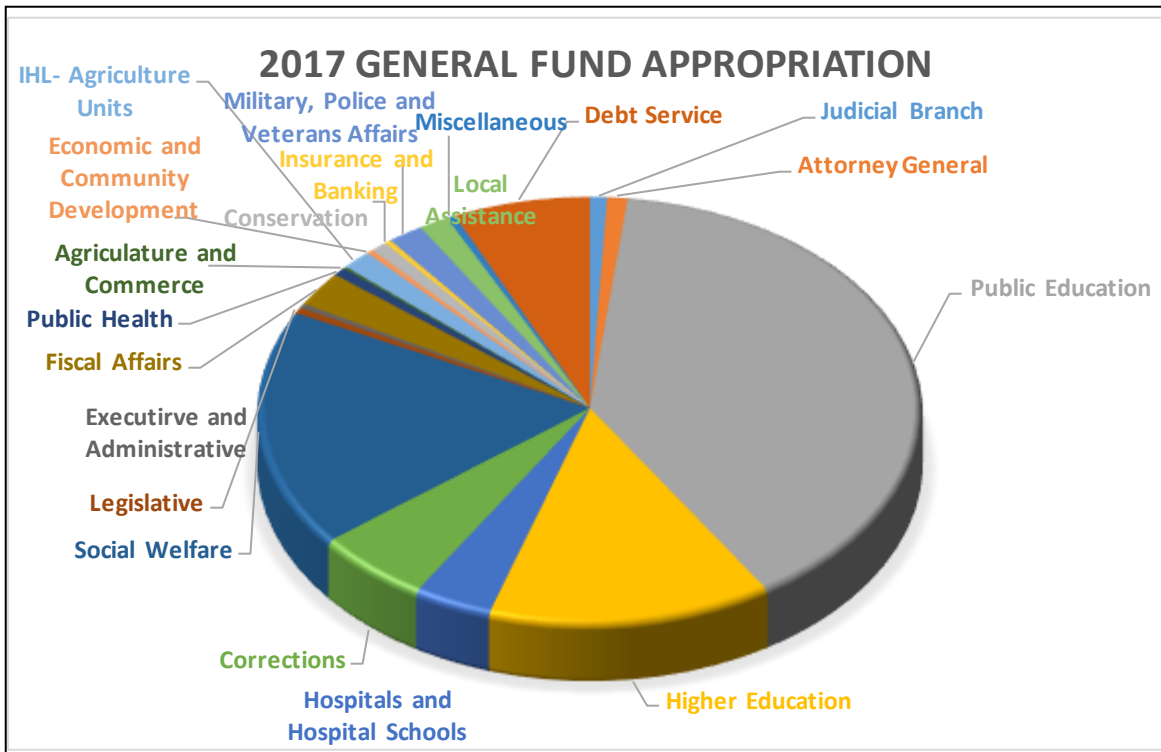
Mississippi County Court District Map

FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE COURTS

The state judiciary is funded by General Fund appropriations with additional funding for specific mandates by way of grants and special funds.

The total 2017 Fiscal Year appropriation for the judicial branch was \$82,065,568, which consists of \$48,552,452 in general funds and \$33,513,116 in special funds. The 2017 Fiscal Year appropriation included \$1,050,000 of general funds that were transferred to the Judicial Performance Commission and the Office of the State Public Defender, which are included with the Attorney General and are not under the Judicial Branch. This transfer resulted in an actual 2017 Fiscal Year appropriation for the Judicial Branch of \$81,015,568, which consisted of

2017 GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION			
(Does not include FY 2016 reappropriations)			
Judicial Branch *	48,552,452		
* Transfer to Other Agencies	(1,050,000)		
Net Appropriation for Judicial Branch		47,502,452	0.8207%
Attorney General	56,995,835		
* Transfer from Judicial Branch	1,050,000		
Net Appropriation to Attorney General		58,045,835	1.0028%
Total Judiciary and Justice per LBO			105,548,287
Other:			
Public Education		2,270,522,215	39.2260%
Higher Education		800,922,769	13.8369%
Hospitals and Hospital Schools		222,144,993	3.8378%
Corrections		326,079,680	5.6334%
Social Welfare		1,043,333,411	18.0248%
Legislative		27,207,693	0.4700%
Executive and Administrative		18,861,759	0.3259%
Fiscal Affairs		153,567,956	2.6531%
Public Health		36,645,538	0.6331%
Agriculture and Commerce		9,159,607	0.1582%
IHL- Agriculture Units		84,993,292	1.4684%
Economic and Community Development		20,140,513	0.3480%
Conservation		46,956,423	0.8112%
Insurance and Banking		18,432,998	0.3185%
Military, Police and Veterans Affairs		102,301,806	1.7674%
Local Assistance		84,454,641	1.4591%
Miscellaneous		24,296,946	0.4198%
Debt Service		392,741,392	6.7851%
Total Other			5,682,763,632
Total General Fund Appropriation for FY2017			5,788,311,919 100.00%
* In accordance with HB1635, \$1,050,000 of the general funds appropriated to the Judicial Branch will be transferred to the Judicial Performance Commission and the Office of the State Public Defender, which are included with the Attorney General's budget.			



\$47,502,452 (58.63 %) general funds and \$33,513,116 (41.37%) special funds. Within the context of General Fund appropriations for all of state government, less than 1 percent of the state's general fund expenditures go to operation of the judicial branch. FY 2017 general fund appropriations for all three branches of state government was \$5,788,311,919.

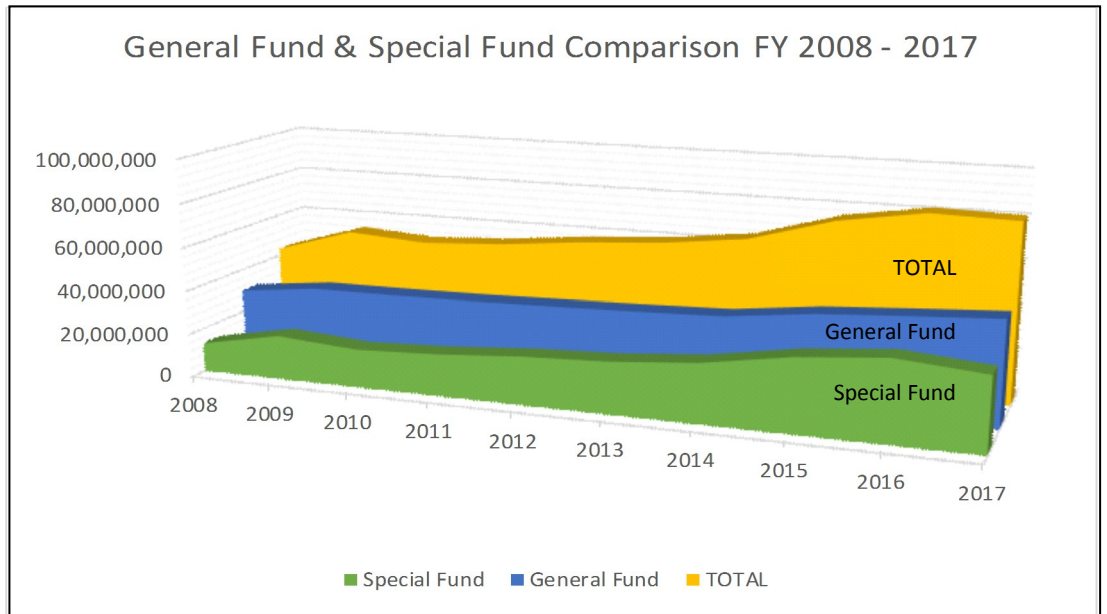
	JUDICIAL BRANCH FY 2017						
	Supreme Court	Court of Appeals	Trial Judges	Admin Office of Courts	Continuing Legal Ed	Board of Bar Admissions	TOTALS
Salaries	6,533,034	5,485,046	27,687,730	18,408,880	118,554	174,000	58,407,244
Travel	344,000	62,200	854,586	95,450	11,200	23,000	1,390,436
Contractual	219,619	67,925	131,500	1,417,854	11,728	103,193	1,951,819
Commodities	451,150	16,850	1,089,000	27,335	2,800	38,300	1,625,435
Equipment	110,900	-	-	65,975	-	-	176,875
Subsidies	-	-	-	18,513,759	-	-	18,513,759
TOTALS	7,658,703	5,632,021	29,762,816	38,529,253	144,282	338,493	82,065,568
Transfer to Other Agencies	-	-	-	(1,050,000)	-	-	(1,050,000)
Judicial Branch Appropriation	7,658,703	5,632,021	29,762,816	37,479,253	144,282	338,493	81,015,568
General Funds	6,783,610	4,633,290	24,197,697	12,937,855	-	-	48,552,452
Transfer to Other Agencies	-	-	-	(1,050,000)	-	-	(1,050,000)
<i>General Funds for use by Judiciary</i>	<i>6,783,610</i>	<i>4,633,290</i>	<i>24,197,697</i>	<i>11,887,855</i>	-	-	<i>47,502,452</i>
Special Funds	875,093	998,731	5,565,119	25,591,398	144,282	338,493	33,513,116
Judicial Branch Appropriation	7,658,703	5,632,021	29,762,816	37,479,253	144,282	338,493	81,015,568
Number of PINS	70	58	109	28	2	3	270

The General Fund appropriation for the Administrative Office of Courts and all state courts of record, including the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, 82 circuit courts, 82 chancery courts, and 21 county courts, was \$47,502,452.

The judicial system's largest expenditure is salaries: \$58,407,244, or 72.09 percent of the entire judicial branch budget, including General Fund and Special Fund appropriations. The last of four incremental judicial pay raises went into effect on January 1, 2016. From and after January 1, 2019, and every four years thereafter, the annual salaries of state judges are to be adjusted to the level of compensation recommended by the State Personnel Board according to the board's most recent report on judicial salaries, as required under Section 25-9-115, to the extent that sufficient funds are available. The annual salaries fixed in accordance with this provision shall not become effective until the commencement of the next immediately succeeding term of office. Judicial compensation realignment was approved by the 2012 Legislature and is funded totally by a \$40 fee collected on all civil filings, a \$100 increase in appellate filing fees and various other fees charged by the Clerk of the Supreme Court.

Judicial Salaries	
Effective January 1, 2016	
Supreme Court Chief Justice	159,000.00
Supreme Court Presiding Justices	154,833.00
Supreme Court Associate Justices	152,250.00
Court of Appeals Chief Judge	147,578.00
Court of Appeals Associate Judges	144,827.00
Chancery Judges	136,000.00
Circuit Judges	136,000.00
County Court Judges	County Judge salaries vary by county. Salaries by statute may be \$1,000 less than Chancery and Circuit Judges.

Special funds are critical to the work of the judicial branch. Mississippi Electronic Courts, an electronic filing system which operated in 39 Chancery Courts and 13 Circuit Courts at the end of 2016, receives no state General Fund appropriation. MEC is funded by a \$10 fee collected on all civil case filings, a \$10 annual registration fee for e-filing system users, and viewing fees of 20 cents per page. The viewing



	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Special Fund	13,288,817	20,284,966	17,611,903	19,215,654	21,999,397	23,567,580	26,843,343	33,189,718	36,683,401	33,513,116
General Fund	30,043,816	34,127,535	34,360,579	34,882,686	35,862,593	36,893,254	38,203,040	42,761,221	45,226,793	47,502,452
TOTAL	43,332,633	54,412,501	51,972,482	54,098,340	57,861,990	60,460,834	65,046,383	75,950,939	81,910,194	81,015,568

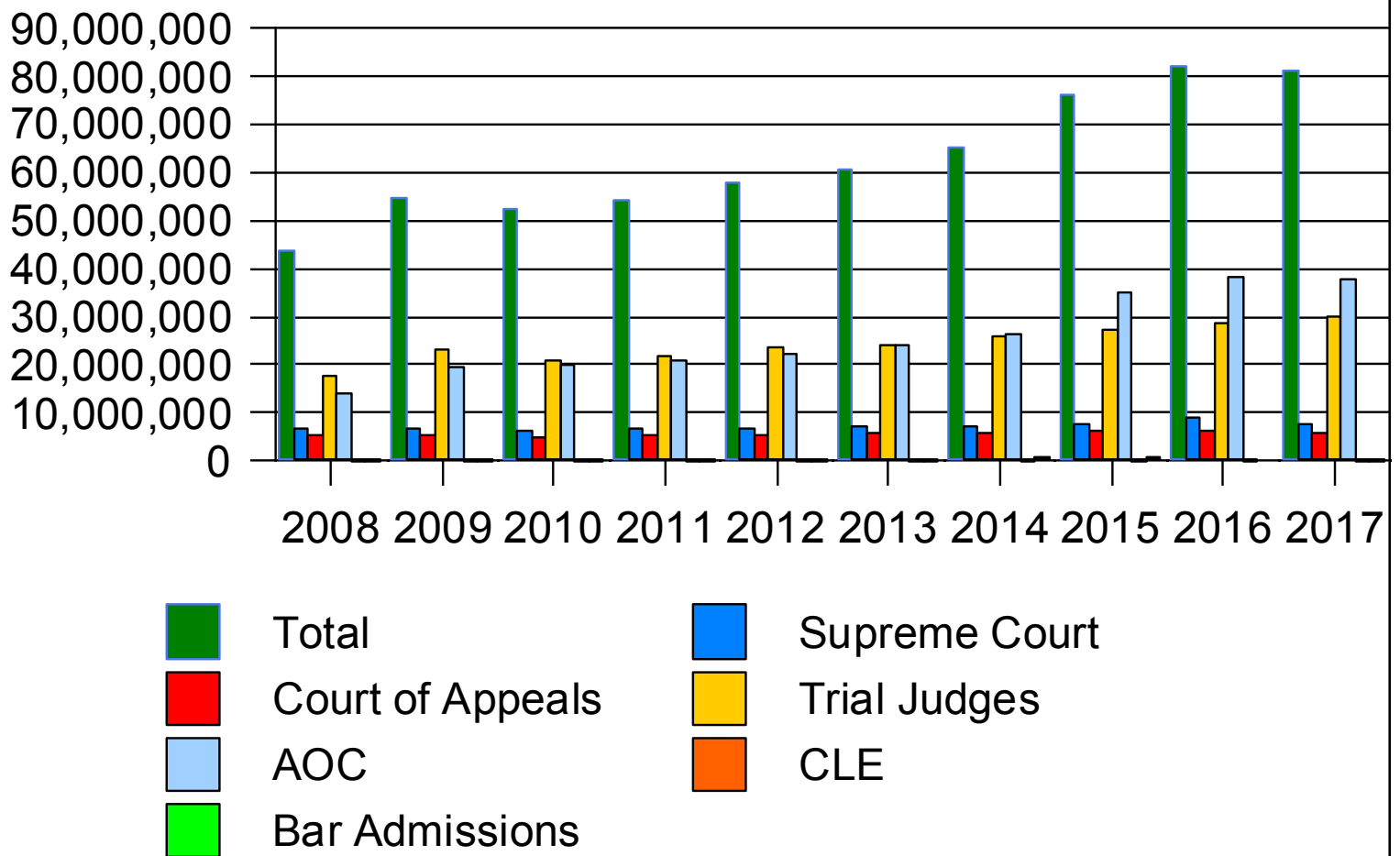
fees are shared equally by MEC and the counties. Other judicial branch entities which receive no General Fund appropriations, relying totally on self-sustaining special fund collections, include the Board of Bar Admissions, the Board of Certified Court Reporters, and the Commission on Continuing Legal Education.

The largest special fund category is the custodial account that pays trial court support staff. County governments pay a portion of the salaries of trial court support staff under Mississippi Code Section 9-1-36. The custodial account is a pass-through for county funds totaling \$14,044,060.

The biggest change in special funds involved the shift of drug court funding from special funds to general funds. Under Senate Bill 2362, passed during the 2016 Regular Legislative Session, special assessments were transferred to the general fund. Drug courts are now completely funded by general fund allocations. Of the \$47,502,452 in general funds appropriated for the judiciary, \$6,500,000 (13.68%) was allocated to the Drug Courts.

The annual budget of the judiciary has grown slightly each year since FY 2010. Judicial compensation realignment was approved by the 2012 Legislature and implemented incrementally through 2016. Drug courts reached statewide coverage in early 2013. Seven judges were elected to newly created trial court judgeships in November 2015 and joined the bench in January 2016. Mississippi Electronic Courts continues to expand into more courts. Leaders of the judiciary have worked extremely hard to secure adequate funding for the judicial branch of government, while providing an efficient, cost effective system of justice for the people of the state of Mississippi.

Judiciary Annual Budgets, FY 2008 - FY 2017





OUTREACH AND INNOVATION

Access to Justice

The Mississippi House of Representatives on March 1, 2016, recognized the Access to Justice Commission for a decade of work to improve poor people's access to the civil justice system. House Concurrent Resolution 23 was adopted by the House on Feb. 8, and by the Senate on Feb. 11, 2016. Rep. David Baria of Bay St. Louis, a Commission member, introduced the resolution.

The Access to Justice Commission observed its 10-year anniversary Aug. 25, 2016, with a summit to reflect on a decade of work to improve civil legal access for the poor, and discuss the future. Lisa Foster, director of the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Access to Justice, gave the keynote address. American Civil Liberties Union Legal Director Paloma Wu and MacArthur Justice Center Director Cliff Johnson talked about litigation that prompted cities to change misdemeanor criminal fine and fee collection practices that disproportionately affect the poor. Mississippi Supreme Court Presiding Justice Jess Dickinson, the court's liaison to the legal services community, challenged access to justice advocates to push for extension of right to counsel for the poor to the civil arena.

The Access to Justice Commission in 2016 continued to work toward improving access to the courts for low-income people by developing forms and web-based assistance, conducting legal assistance clinics and searching for additional resources to fill the unmet legal needs of the poor. Forms to assist pro se litigants with name changes were finalized in January 2016 and made available to the state's two Legal Services programs and the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project. The name change forms are the third set of forms developed for use statewide. Forms for irreconcilable differences divorces and removal of disability of minority/emancipation were finalized in 2015.

The Commission has worked closely with The Mississippi Bar, the state's legal services providers and others to procure additional support for civil legal services. In May 2016, the Commission submitted written comments to the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) regarding its funding request to Congress for the 2018 fiscal year. The Commission actively scouted grant and other funding opportunities to support the nonprofit legal aid programs. The Commission continues to work with The Mississippi Bar Foundation on the disbursement of the Bank of American Settlement Agreement funds.

On May 4, the Commission, the State Department of Health's Office of Health Disparities Elimination and the Mississippi Center for Justice hosted the state's first Medical-Legal Partnership Learning Session at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Participants discussed ways that health care and legal communities can work together to assist the poor.

Work began in early 2016 to develop a web application to guide self-represented litigants through Chancery Court proceedings. Thomas Ortega, owner of OmegaOrtega.com, volunteered to develop the web application for free.

In August 2016, the Commission and the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project launched Mississippi Free Legal Answers, the state’s first free online civil legal help website, available at <https://MS.freelegalanswers.org>. The site does not deal with criminal law questions. Low income individuals who qualify for assistance can sign up for an account and post a question privately to the website. Volunteer attorneys will respond.

The Commission and the Young Lawyers Division of The Mississippi Bar co-sponsored three Lawyers in the Library legal advice clinics in Pascagoula, Cleveland and Jackson. Topics included expungement, family law, Social Security and estate planning. A total of 107 people received legal advice from 40 *pro bono* attorneys. The Commission and the Mississippi Association for Justice partnered on expungement workshops and clinics in Meridian, Jackson and Hattiesburg. A total of 95 *pro bono* attorneys and law students assisted 523 people. In September 2016, the Commission, in partnership with two web developers, launched an expungement resource tool that enables attorneys to electronically screen individuals who attend expungement workshops and clinics and immediately export the data they collect at the events.

The Mississippi Supreme Court created the Access to Justice Commission by order on June 28, 2006, to develop a unified strategy to improve access to the civil courts for the poor. The Commission is tasked to investigate the need for civil legal services to the poor in Mississippi, and to evaluate, develop and recommend policies, programs and initiatives which will assist the judiciary in meeting needs for civil legal services to the poor.

Civil Legal Assistance Fund

The Supreme Court during Fiscal Year 2016 distributed \$785,254.03 for civil legal assistance to low income people.

Year	Funding provided	
2004	\$115,000.00	The funds are provided to the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project, North Mississippi Rural Legal Services and the Mississippi Center for Legal Services. Since the Civil Legal Assistance Fund was created in 2004, more than \$7.4 million has been disbursed to help poor people to gain access to the legal system to have their civil legal disputes addressed. Civil Legal Assistance Fund distributions are paid from special assessments on court filings and from fees charged to out-of-state attorneys appearing <i>pro hac vice</i> . No general fund appropriations are used.
2005	\$230,000.00	
2006	\$145,000.00	
2007	\$280,000.00	
2008	\$774,663.00	
2009	\$887,000.00	
2010	\$800,000.00	
2011	\$753,000.00	
2012	\$662,500.00	
2013	\$594,119.09	
2014	\$597,480.76	
2015	\$797,192.69	
2016	\$785,254.03	
TOTAL	\$7,421,209.57	

Legal Services offices turn away half or more of the eligible people who seek legal aid; Legal Services lacks the resources to handle all of the cases. MVLP takes some of the cases referred by Legal Services. Mississippi has an estimated 695,000 people living at or below poverty level. They lack the means to pay for legal services. Legal Services organizations and MVLP can’t meet all of the legal needs.

Court Interpreter Credentialing Program

The Administrative Office of Courts added five new credentialed interpreters in 2016, bringing the state’s total of credentialed interpreters to 21. The credentialing program provides two levels of proficiency: registered and certified. Credentialed interpreters include 19 Spanish speakers, one Russian speaker, and one who speaks Mandarin Chinese. Nine interpreters are certified, and 12 are registered. Interpreters live in Biloxi, Brandon, Clinton, French Camp, Gulfport, Hazlehurst, Meridian, Newton, Ocean Springs, Tupelo and Vicksburg as well as Cordova, Goodlettsville, Memphis and Nashville, Tenn., North Augusta, S.C., and New Orleans.

AOC during 2016 conducted two seminars in Jackson and Long Beach to introduce bilingual speakers to the requirements for court interpreting. Seminars introduced prospective foreign language interpreters to interpreting in legal settings including the courtroom, depositions and other legal proceedings. Attendance at the seminar is the first step in the program which will train, certify, and test individuals who wish to serve as court interpreters. Court interpreters must understand court proceedings and be fluent in English and a second language.



AOC developed the Mississippi Court Interpreter Credentialing Program to assist courts in efforts to provide equal access to justice for limited English proficiency individuals. The program provides judges with a list of language interpreters who have demonstrated proficiency in oral and written interpretation of court proceedings. The rules for court interpreters apply to municipal court, justice court, youth court, county court, circuit court, chancery court and grand jury proceedings.

Drug Courts

Funding for drug courts shifted from special funds to general funds in 2016. Drug courts are entirely funded from the general fund as a result of Senate Bill 2362, which was enacted during the 2016 Regular Session. Of the \$47,502,452 in general funds appropriated for the judiciary, \$6,500,000 (13.68%) was allocated to the drug courts. Special assessments authorized by Mississippi Code Section 99-19-73 as the original mechanism for funding drug courts are transferred to the general fund.

Harrison County Youth Court became the third to operate a Family Drug Court, adding the program to assist parents whose drug problems resulted in their children being taken into the custody of the Department of Child Protection Services or being involved in proceedings with the Youth Court.

The Drug Court Compliance office, in its second year of operation, performed 222 site visits and reviews to drug courts including 68 (31 %) unannounced visits. The compliance director and three staff members monitor drug courts for compliance with state statutes, adherence to the Ten Key Components of drug court operations, rules of the Drug Court Advisory Committee and best practices. Reviews also include observations and advice on issues to be addressed regarding upcoming re-certification inspection to be completed by July 1, 2017.

2015-2016 Calendar Year Drug Court Comparison		
	2015	2016
Total drug court programs	42	41
Total people served by drug courts statewide	4,042	4,993
Drug court graduates	563	772
Drug-free babies born	78	62
Participants who earned GEDs	74	133
Previously unemployed who found jobs	861	1,016
Fines collected and returned to county general funds	\$1,171,050.37	\$1,226,199.59
Fees paid by participants that offset cost of operating drug courts	\$1,551,919.30	\$1,633,477.83
Hours of community service work by participants	24,920.5	29,251

A total of 41 drug courts were certified to operate in Mississippi at the end of 2016. There are 22 adult felony programs. A drug court operates in every Circuit Court district. There are also 13 juvenile programs, three misdemeanor programs and three family drug

courts. Drug courts may operate within Circuit Courts, Chancery Courts, Youth Courts, Justice Courts or Municipal Courts.

Nearly 5,000 people were served by drug courts during the 2016 calendar year, and 772 people graduated from drug courts. Drug courts save an estimated \$46 million annually in incarceration costs, and save millions more in avoided health and social services expenses.



Commission on Children’s Justice

The Mississippi Supreme Court charged the Commission on Children’s Justice with developing a statewide comprehensive approach to improving the child welfare system; coordinating the three branches of government in assessing the impact of government actions on children who are abused or neglected; and recommending changes to improve children’s safety, strengthen and support families and promote public trust and confidence in the child welfare system. The Commission’s efforts have grown to include numerous programs, described in the following subsections:

Indigent Parent Representation

A Parent Representation Committee grew out of the work of the Commission on Children’s Justice. After extensive efforts by members of the Committee and others supportive of indigent parent representation, the 2016 Legislature codified the Youth Court’s authority to appoint an attorney to represent indigent parents. House Bill 772 of the 2016 Regular Session says, “If the court determines that a parent or guardian who is a party in an abuse, neglect or termination of parental rights proceeding is indigent, the youth court judge may appoint counsel to represent the indigent parent or guardian in the proceeding.”

Members of the Committee continue to seek public and private funding to maintain and expand pilot programs that provide attorneys for indigent parents facing allegations of abuse and neglect in Youth Court. In 2016, DeSoto County became the sixth county to offer parent representation through the pilot project. The DeSoto County Board of Supervisors matches a grant from Casey Family Programs. A grant from the Kellogg Foundation, secured through the assistance of Access to Justice Commission Executive Director Tiffany Graves in April 2016, provided training for parent attorneys who practice in Youth Court and is expected to allow indigent parent representation to be offered in several more counties. Indigent parent representation continued to be provided in Adams, Forrest, Hancock, Harrison and Rankin counties through the pilot program. Since the pilot program’s inception in 2012, funding has been provided largely by Casey Family Programs. Part of a Court Improvement Program grant helps to fund the Rankin County program.

Termination of Parental Rights Study Group

The Termination of Parental Rights Study Group, which began its work in August 2015, made an extensive study of all statutes which affect termination of parental rights and drafted proposed legislation. Gov. Phil Bryant signed House Bill 1240, the Termination of Parental Rights Act, on April 18, 2016. Changes included removal of provisions that had blocked adoption

of children by relatives in some cases and removal of provisions that prevented termination of parental rights of an estranged parent in some cases. The Study Group continued to examine the workings of the statutes and need for further changes to effectively address challenging TPR cases and to adequately protect the lives and wellbeing of children. Proposed legislation was drafted to be submitted during the 2017 session.

Rescue 100

Churches, the courts and the Department of Child Protection Services worked together to train foster parents more quickly and efficiently. The effort, called Rescue 100, started in 2015 at Michael Memorial Baptist Church in Gulfport with plans to recruit and train enough foster parents to meet the needs of Harrison County. Conventional foster parent training takes many months. Frustrations over the slow process led to the creation of a weekend program that packed most of the required training into three days. Justice Dawn Beam, co-chair of the Commission on Children’s Justice, spearheaded planning efforts. Michael Memorial Baptist Church in Gulfport hosted the first training April 15-17, 2016. Rescue 100 foster parent training was held July 29-31 at William Carey University in Hattiesburg, and a third was held Oct. 21-23 at Mississippi College in Clinton. By the end of 2016, a total of 105 foster parent homes were licensed as a result of the Rescue 100 programs, according to Child Protection Services data.

ReNewMS

The Commission on Children’s Justice launched a pilot program, ReNewMS, aimed at reducing and preventing child abuse and neglect by helping parents break the cycle of drug addiction. First Lady Deborah Bryant and Supreme Court Justice Dawn Beam, ReNewMS co-chairs, announced the program on Oct. 14, 2016.

Work began first in Marion County. Efforts were directed at counties with the highest incidence of children removed from parents’ custody — Hancock, Pearl River and Marion counties. In October 2016, Hancock County had 327 children in custody of Child Protection Services. Of those, 214 had indications of parental drug abuse. In Pearl River County, 226 children were in custody, 148 because of parental drug abuse. Marion County has 254 children in custody, 129 because of parental drug abuse.



Work began first in Marion County. Efforts were directed at counties with the highest incidence of children removed from parents’ custody — Hancock, Pearl River and Marion counties. In October 2016, Hancock County had 327 children in custody of Child Protection Services. Of those, 214 had indications of parental drug abuse. In Pearl River County, 226 children were in custody, 148 because of parental drug abuse. Marion County has 254 children in custody, 129 because of parental drug abuse.

ReNewMS seeks to provide drug treatment and prevention services and other social services in an attempt to help parents and expectant mothers to become and remain drug-free. Emphasis is on healing and reuniting families. ReNewMS works to provide intervention, counseling, intensive outpatient/inpatient therapy, medication assisted therapy, nutrition and wellness.

ReNewMS sought collaboration with the courts, Department of Child Protection Services, the Division of Medicaid, Department of Mental Health, Department of Health, Pharmacy Board, the Children’s Advocacy Center and the Mississippi Hospital Association. ReNewMS sought community involvement, identifying available services and asking how each community can better serve children and families in crisis. The program sought involvement from doctors’ offices, drug treatment centers, county housing offices, churches and others.

Opioid abuse by parents is a leading cause of child abuse and neglect, and has increased the number of children taken into custody by the Department of Child Protection Services and placed in foster care. Drug abuse which has caused or contributed to child neglect or abuse is grounds for the courts to remove children from parents. In 2013, about 28 percent of the 2,500 cases of children entering state custody were related to parental drug abuse issues. In 2016, more than 45 percent of the custody cases were related directly to drug abuse by parents, according to Child Protection Services.

Human Trafficking

An increasing awareness of human trafficking prompted the formation in 2016 of a technical assistance program entitled Addressing Human Trafficking Involved Cases in the Mississippi Courts. The program's first priority is human trafficking involving juveniles. It focuses on issues faced by youth courts in identifying juvenile trafficking victims and finding services to help them. The program works to increase understanding among judicial officers, court practitioners and criminal justice partners about the types and dynamics of human trafficking, and to expand the scope and efficiency of the courts in handling human trafficking cases. This work is overseen by the Mississippi Human Trafficking Judicial Task Force, made up of representatives of the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Mental Health, Mississippi Judicial College, Department of Public Safety, Child Advocacy Centers, the Attorney General's Office, the Administrative Office of Courts, the Jurist in Residence, and the chair of the Conference of Youth Court Judges. The program is funded by a grant from the State Justice Institute.

Children's Justice Act Task Force

The Mississippi Children's Justice Act Task Force is a gubernatorial appointed multi-disciplinary group with primary responsibility for meeting the mandates of Section 107 of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The Task Force is made up of judges, prosecutors, investigators, counselors, social workers and others experienced in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse. The Task Force makes policy and training recommendations regarding methods to better handle child abuse prosecutions, with the expectation that it will result in reduced trauma to the child victim and the victim's family, while insuring fairness to the accused. The Task Force meets quarterly, and its members provide oversight and management for the Children's Justice Act Grant. The 2016 grant was \$189,201. The Department of Human Services had been the entity designated by the Governor to administer Children's Justice Act Grant funds since the Task Force was created in 2004. In 2016, the Task Force requested that Children's Justice Act duties and funds be transferred to the Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi. It is hoped that with this change, Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi will be able to evolve and expand the focus and impact of CJA activities.

Resident Jurist

Former Adams County Court and Youth Court Judge John N. Hudson, who became Resident Jurist in April 2015, is a resource person to the judicial system and to local courts on emerging issues such as child abuse reporting, termination of parental rights, general child protection services issues of competency in court proceedings, indigent parental representation, truancy/education neglect and crossover youth. He fielded numerous calls from judges, prosecutor and others on those issues. The Resident Jurist and Commissioner of Child Protection Services Dr. David Chandler discuss emerging concerns in child protection through bi-weekly telephone calls. The Resident Jurist made presentations at the Youth Court Judges annual conference, the Mississippi Court Administrators Conference and at seminars for court clerks.



The Resident Jurist met with key legislators before the session and participated in legislative committee meetings, small group meetings with chairs of key committees and general members to educate legislators on the needs of youth court and youth court practice. He created position papers on legislative proposals. Significant legislation passed in 2016 included rewriting the Termination of Parental Rights statute, legislative provision for authority for youth court judges to appoint attorneys for indigent parents in abuse and neglect cases, and mandatory juvenile detention standards for licensing. Among the needs of youth court jurisdiction for the upcoming 2017 session are funding indigent parent representation and legislation involving guardianship assistance and fictive care.

The Resident Jurist serves on boards and committees including Kids Count, Children's Advocacy Centers of Missis-



Mississippi, the Methodist Children’s Home, the Supreme Court’s Judicial Advisory Study Committee, the Indigent Parent Representation Committee and a task force to create an inclusive seminar on courts and the military. He also served on task forces in local communities addressing issues which relate to the fair, effective and efficient administration of courts.

The Resident Jurist worked with Children’s Advocacy Centers and a task group to develop a plan to address the release of forensic interview DVDs and the need to maintain confidentiality of that information. He continued to work with the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative State Advisory Group to develop a statewide risk assessment instrument for youth and children to assess the necessity of placement in a detention setting. The objective is to ensure that only those youths who are a safety risk are placed in detention. He worked with the Indigent Parental Representation Task Force to continue the pilot sites that provide attorney representation to indigent parents. He met regularly with parent attorneys to discuss emerging issues in their local courts and offer help in resolution. He worked with the Attorney General’s Office and AOC to improve court processes in dealing with victims of human trafficking.

Electronic Filing and Case Management: Mississippi Electronic Courts

The Mississippi Electronic Courts (MEC) program implemented e-filing systems in 20 courts during 2016, including 15 Chancery Courts and five Circuit Courts. Courts which began electronic filing in 2016 included Chancery Courts in Alcorn, Amite, Coahoma, Copiah, Franklin, Forrest, George, Hancock, Lincoln, Lamar, Marshall, Pearl River, Perry, Pike and Walthall counties and Circuit Courts in DeSoto, Jasper, Lawrence, Marion and Pearl River counties.

A total of 52 trial courts were using the MEC system at the end of 2016. MEC is currently being utilized in 39 chancery courts and 13 circuit courts. Six of the 13 circuit courts utilize MEC for criminal records. Those counties are Clay, Hinds, Jasper, Jefferson Davis, Lawrence and Tate. The other seven circuit courts utilize MEC only for civil cases.

MEC emphasizes district-wide implementation of e-filing to achieve maximum efficiency. Due to the District Chancery model being finalized in FY 2016, MEC has been able to roll out courts at a faster rate. MEC’s goal is to cover 84 percent of the Mississippi population in Chancery Courts and 45 percent of the state’s population in Circuit Courts by the end of FY 2017.

In courts that use MEC district-wide, judges and court staff are better able to track cases and coordinate scheduling of court proceedings. Judges and staff are able to file and view documents from all counties in the district via the Internet. The 10th Chancery was the model for developing a district-wide implementation plan. Chancery Courts which use MEC district-wide include Districts 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15 and 20. The 7th and 20th Circuit Courts have MEC district-wide. The 8th Circuit of Leake, Neshoba, Scott and Newton counties has requested to implement MEC. The 19th Circuit of George, Greene and Jackson counties will begin MEC implementation after MEC is completed in the Chancery Courts of those same counties.

MEC continues to develop added features. Chancery Districts 3, 8 and 11 are able to electronically transmit to the Supreme Court notices of appeal, documents and the record on appeal. Circuit Courts have access to an accounting and bookkeeping feature that will provide reports for reconciliation and disbursement of civil fees, fines and other financial obligations.

Type of Court	Total Amount	MEC	Clerks
Chancery	\$499,735.60	\$249,867.80	\$249,867.80
Circuit	\$465,061.80	\$232,530.90	\$232,530.90

premise Court notices of appeal, documents and the record on appeal. Circuit Courts have access to an accounting and bookkeeping feature that will provide reports for reconciliation and disbursement of civil fees, fines and other financial obligations.

The MEC system is funded solely through collection of civil filing fees and usage and renewal fees. As of December 31, 2016, MEC had a total of 6,209 attorney users and 3,475 non-attorney users. Since its inception, MEC has generated fees totaling \$964,797.40. Those funds are divided equally between the clerks of court and MEC.

MEC allows attorneys to file and view documents 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in all MEC participating courts. Judges can access documents at any time and location via the Internet, allowing them to prepare for hearings and draft orders and opinions without waiting for paper files. Public access is easier.

MEC in 2015 began to redesign the system of data storage, search and retrieval for e-filing so that the system can operate at a fraction of the originally projected cost. The cost-saving redesign continued in 2016.

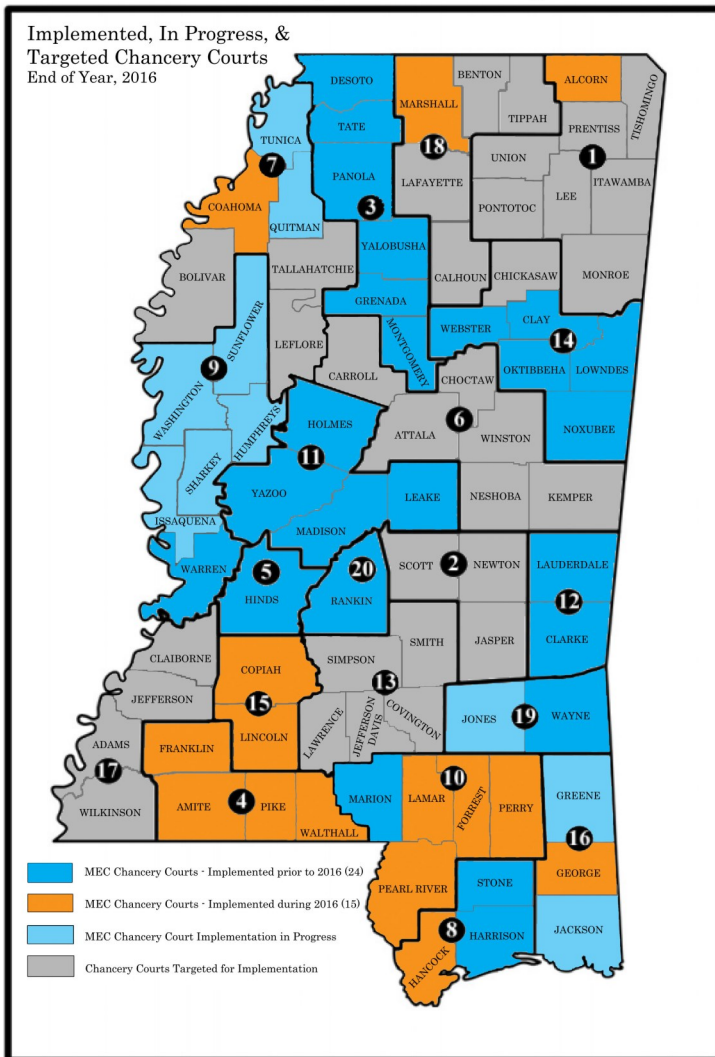
Each court originally operated with two servers: an inside server and an outside server. The model, if built to completion, would have required 164 servers (two servers for each of the 82 counties) for Chancery Courts and 164 servers for Circuit Courts, or a total of 328 servers. The expense would be unsustainable.

Under the current operation, two servers are used for each court district. That means 40 servers to store all of the data for 20 Chancery Court Districts and 44 servers to store all of the data for 22 Circuit Court districts.

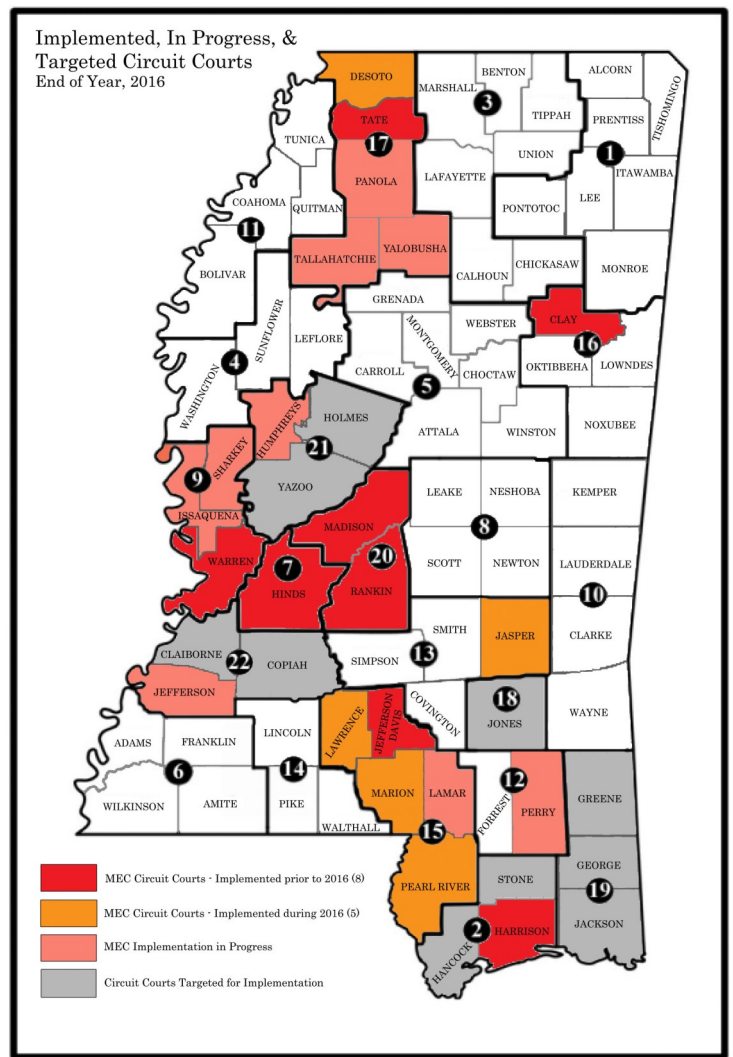
MEC has already designed a Statewide Instance for Chancery and Circuit courts. The goal is to implement Statewide Instances in the future and further reduced the number of servers.

MEC adapted the e-filing system of the federal courts. Design and implementation of MEC began in Chancery Courts, and the majority of current MEC users are Chancery Courts. The MEC system is provided free to participating trial courts.

Mississippi Chancery Courts District Implementation Map



Mississippi Circuit Court Districts MEC Implementation Map



MEC implementation is part of a long-range initiative of the Mississippi Supreme Court to provide a uniform electronic case filing and court management system for distribution to the chancery, circuit and county courts and their respective clerks' offices.

Information Technology

The Information Technology Division of the Supreme Court and the Administrative Office of Courts consists of a small staff of software developers, systems administrators, business systems analysts/trainers, and a webmaster. Their responsibilities include the purchase, installation and maintenance of all computer and network equipment in the appellate courts and some trial courts; development, training, and support of several software systems such as the appellate court case management system CITS, the appellate court e-filing system MEC, the statewide Youth Court case management system MYCIDS, the AOC statistical system SCATS; and design and maintenance of the State of Mississippi Judiciary website.

IT continued the development and integration of the Mississippi Electronic Courts system into the appellate court case management system of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. Electronic filing of the notice of appeal was implemented in 2016 for courts in the Third, Eighth and Eleventh Chancery Districts, with expansion to other courts planned for 2017.

Development was completed of a new module in CITS that will allow Supreme Court justices and Court of Appeals judges to electronically sign orders, with release planned for early 2017.

IT launched a redesigned website in beta for the State of Mississippi Judiciary at the end of 2016. The redesign is mobile ready, making court information easily accessible on smartphones and tablets. The site was made accessible via a link at the top of the homepage of the old website, with plans for it to become the primary website in 2017.

IT also continued development of the BarWeb online bar application for the Mississippi Board of Bar Admissions. Initial applications were accepted online for the July 2016 and February 2017 bar exams. There were 108 electronic applications for the July 2016 bar exam and 45 electronic applications for the February 2017 exam. Development of the second phase to accept online payments and expand availability was planned for 2017.

Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System (MYCIDS)

The Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System, MYCIDS, is a technology program designed to help Youth Courts organize work and records efficiently and save staff time and resources. MYCIDS includes electronic docketing and record keeping for delinquency, abuse and neglect cases. Case tracking features assist court staff in scheduling all hearings and other events required by law to occur within a specific time. Judges and court staff are able to track juveniles' encounters with multiple jurisdictions. Computer hardware, staff training and a help desk are provided by the Supreme Court at no charge to local courts.

An electronic Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth, SAVRY, module was completed and released into MYCIDS for use by the Mississippi Department of Human Services and Department of Child Protection Services. Development then began for the second phase of the MDHS-DYS module in MYCIDS to further aid the Oakley Youth Development Center in the student intake process, with release planned in mid -2017.

Two new business systems analysts/trainers were added to the IT Department to assist in providing training and support for MYCIDS users across the state. In 2016, 184 sessions encompassing 552 hours of MYCIDS training were held in 45 of the 83 youth courts. Legislative mandate and the *In re Olivia Y.* lawsuit require extensive and continuous training. Training must continue year-around to keep up with the high turnover rate of social workers.

Termination of Parental Rights, TPR training was held in five county courts. The MYCIDS team also gave presentations at the Mississippi Juvenile Justice Symposium and the Mississippi Youth Court Judges and Referees Seminar.

Reentry Council

The Reentry Council works to create effective strategies to assist former inmates in their return to society, reduce recidi-

visism, provide ample funds for operating the state prison system and improve public safety. The Council seeks ways to help former inmates find employment, housing, transportation, medical and mental health services. The Reentry Council began as an ad hoc group in December 2013 and was formalized by the Legislature in 2015. U.S. District Judge Keith Starrett of Hattiesburg is chairman of the Reentry Council, and Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. is vice-chair. The Council has a 12-member steering committee.

The Reentry Council on April 14, 2016, made recommendations regarding employment, housing, mental health care and other issues affecting former inmates after their release from prison. In its first report to the Governor, the Legislature and the Supreme Court, the Reentry Council called for continued development of programming in prisons to prepare inmates for jobs and asked the Legislature to investigate creation of a system of mental health and reentry courts modeled on the state's drug courts. About 17 percent of inmates leaving state prisons have diagnosed mental health issues. Many are on medications, and they are provided a 30-day supply upon release from prison. The report also called for implementing a memorandum of understanding with the Social Security Administration to provide immediate access to SSI and Medicaid benefits for mentally ill inmates upon release from prison.

The report pointed out that a significant number of inmates who are eligible for parole remain in custody because they have no place to go, increasing incarceration costs. The Council proposed to use the Marion/Walthall Regional Jail for a pilot program for transitional housing, a halfway house, a technical violation center and a cognitive behavior modification program for inmates leaving prison.



The Reentry Council report noted that from 2013 to 2015, the state's inmate population declined by more than 4,000. The report credited sweeping changes in sentencing laws brought about by House Bill 585, which was passed by the 2014 Legislature. But the report said that labor-intensive and expensive requirements of HB 585, including risk-needs assessments of inmates, had not been completely implemented. The report called for appropriate funding to allow all mandates of the reform

The position of reentry coordinator was created at the Department of Corrections in 2015 but remained unfilled in 2016. The Reentry Council partnered with the Department of Corrections to secure a \$500,000 grant from Justice Reinvestment Act funds. The grant was to be shared, with \$150,000 to fund the reentry coordinator position for two years. More than 200 people applied for the position, but a five-member review committee found that none possessed all of the skills needed.

Former Senator Neely Carlton, who is not a member of the Reentry Council but is interested in its work, suggested that the Council consider hiring Young People In Recovery rather than a single reentry coordinator. After discussion at its July 19, 2016, meeting, the Reentry Council offered a contract to YPR. YPR proposed operating three pilot sites for two years. However, the proposal hit a snag with the grant funding. The Bureau of Justice Assistance said that the grant had been written for hiring an individual reentry coordinator, and that the grant could not be rewritten afterwards to allow for hiring YPR. Commissioner of Corrections Marshall Fisher later proposed that the Inmate Welfare Fund might be able to provide the funding. The Reentry Council awaits a decision from the Inmate Welfare Fund Committee as to whether to approve funding.

The Reentry Council on July 19, 2016, conducted a two and one-half hour workshop to address implementation of best practices for reducing inmate recidivism. Dennis Schrantz, director of the Center for Justice Innovation at the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency, was the keynote speaker. Legislators, corrections officials and interested members of the public attended the program at the Gartin Justice Building.



THE APPELLATE COURTS OF MISSISSIPPI

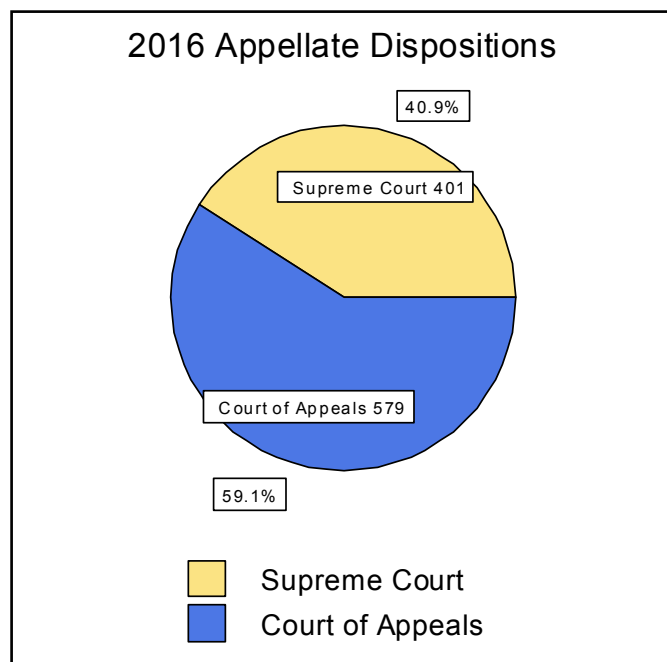
The Mississippi Supreme Court

All appeals from the Circuit, Chancery and Youth Courts of the state come to the Supreme Court. Appeals from the Justice Courts go to the Circuit Courts or to the County Courts where available. County Court appeals are to either the Circuit Courts, the Chancery Courts, or the Supreme Court, depending on the subject matter and type of case.

Certain appeals are, as a class, retained and decided by the Supreme Court. Others may be assigned by the Supreme Court to the Court of Appeals. In deciding whether to retain a case, the Supreme Court considers the uniqueness of the case, the likelihood that its decision will be of important precedential value, whether it raises issues of first impression or interpretation, and the relative workloads of the two appellate courts.

Cases which must be retained by the Supreme Court are those which involve:

- (a) imposition of the death penalty;
- (b) utility rates;
- (c) annexations;
- (d) bond issues;
- (e) election contests;
- (f) a trial court's holding a statute unconstitutional;
- (g) bar discipline matters;
- (h) judicial performance matters;
- (i) certified questions from federal court.



In addition to its workload of retained cases, the Supreme Court decides all interlocutory appeals and all petitions for writ of certiorari from the Court of Appeals, and has significant administrative responsibilities such as rule making obligations ranging from rules of procedure to Bar admissions.

In 2016, the Supreme Court disposed of 401 cases. Of those, 165 cases were decided on the merits. The remaining cases were dismissed. Of the 138 *appeals* decided on the merits, 103 (74.6 percent) were civil, and 35 (25.4 percent) were criminal. Of the 103 civil appeals decided on the merits, 51 (49.51 percent) were affirmed, and 52 (50.49 percent) were reversed. Of the 35 criminal appeals decided on the merits, 25 (71.43 percent) were affirmed, 9 (25.71 percent) were reversed, and 1 (2.86 percent) was remanded.

2016 Appellate Case Filings	
Notices of Appeal, General	863
Death Penalty Direct Appeal	0
Death Penalty PCR Applications	7
Bar Discipline Cases	4
Bar Discipline Appeals	1
Bar Reinstatement Cases	2
Judicial Performance Cases	4
Annexation Cases	0
Election Contests	6
Interlocutory Appeals Granted	44
Certiorari Petitions Granted	27
Workers' Compensation Appeals	24
Utility Rate Cases	1
Federally Certified Questions	0
Total New Cases Filed	983

The Supreme Court disposed of a total of 4,212 motions and petitions during 2016. This included 62 motions for rehearing, of which 60 (96.8 percent) were denied, and 2 (3.2 percent) were granted. Pursuant to Rule 5 of the Mississippi Rules of Appellate Procedure, the Court disposed of 152 petitions for interlocutory appeal. Of those, 89 (58.55 percent) were denied, 44 (28.95 percent) were granted, and 19 (12.5 percent) were dismissed.

In 2016, the Supreme Court disposed of 183 petitions for writ of certiorari. Of those, 27 (14.75 percent) were granted; 144 (80.87 percent) were denied; and 8 (4.37 percent) were dismissed.

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments in 37 cases in 2016.

2016 Case Dispositions			
	Supreme Court	Court of Appeals	Courts Combined
Dismissed by Clerk's Rule 2 Notice	78	30	108
Dismissed by Order of Court	155	22	177
Certiorari Petitions Dismissed after Grant	3	0	3
Decided by Published Opinion	154	500	654
Per Curiam Affirmed	4	0	4
Decided by Order	7	27	34
Total Case Dispositions	401	579	980

2016 Dispositions of Rehearing Motions, Interlocutory Appeals and Certiorari Petitions			
	Supreme Court	Court of Appeals	Courts Combined
Motions for Rehearing	62	250	312
Petitions for Interlocutory Appeal	152	0	152
Petitions for Certiorari	183	0	183



Court of Appeals of the State of Mississippi

The Court of Appeals does an outstanding job of deciding a large number of direct appeals. The Court of Appeals is sometimes referred to as an error corrections court. Typical cases assigned to the court of appeals are those in which the law is already settled. These cases may deal with evidentiary issues which arose during the trial and with the weight and sufficiency of the evidence supporting the judgment. Also, all workers' compensation cases are referred to the Court of Appeals.

In 2016, the Court of Appeals disposed of 579 cases. Of this number, 527 were decided on the merits. The remaining cases were dismissed. Of those decided on the merits, 358 were civil, and 121 were criminal. Of the 358 civil cases decided, 280 were affirmed and 78 were reversed. Of the 121 criminal appeals decided, 103 were affirmed, and 18 were reversed.

The Court of Appeals disposed of a total of 1,875 motions and petitions during 2016. This included 250 motions for rehearing, of which 246 (98.4 percent) were denied, none were granted and 4 (1.6 percent) were dismissed.

The Court of Appeals heard oral argument in 67 cases in 2016 — double the cases granted oral arguments in the previous year.

Both appellate courts strive to decide cases within 270 days following completion of briefing, and in most cases, decisions are made more expeditiously. The Supreme Court's average time from end of briefing to case decision was 200 days during 2016, and the Court of Appeals' average time was 228 days. All petitions for writ of certiorari from the Court of Appeals are either granted, denied or dismissed by the Supreme Court within 90 days following the filing of the responses to the petitions. Cases on review by certiorari must be decided within 180 days after the petitions are granted. The Supreme Court's average time was 91 days. Petitions for interlocutory appeal are usually granted, denied, or dismissed within 45 days after the responses are filed.

Office of the Clerk of the Mississippi Supreme Court and Court of Appeals



Muriel B. Ellis is Clerk of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals.

The Office of the Clerk is the repository of records of the Mississippi Supreme Court and the Mississippi Court of Appeals. The Clerk's Office is responsible for docket management of approximately 1,700 open cases at any given time. The Clerk of Courts and a 12-member staff are responsible for case management that tracks each appeal for timeliness and completeness of the record from the time the case is filed until it is decided by the court.

The volume of appeals filed showed little change; 861 new appeals were filed in 2016, compared to 863 in 2015.

The Clerk's Office continued to work with the Information Technology Department to expand electronic filing, adding capability to e-file notices of appeals in three chancery districts to test the process. E-filing of court records on appeal will be implemented in 2017. E-filing of the record on appeal is expected to provide an enormous savings of staff time for Circuit and Chancery clerks. Gathering and submitting an e-filed trial court record is expected to take only minutes, compared to days of manually copying records.

The year 2016 was the third year of mandatory e-filing for briefs and motions. In 2016, 6,064 briefs, motions and responses were filed — a decrease compared to 2015, when 6,563 briefs, motions and responses were filed.

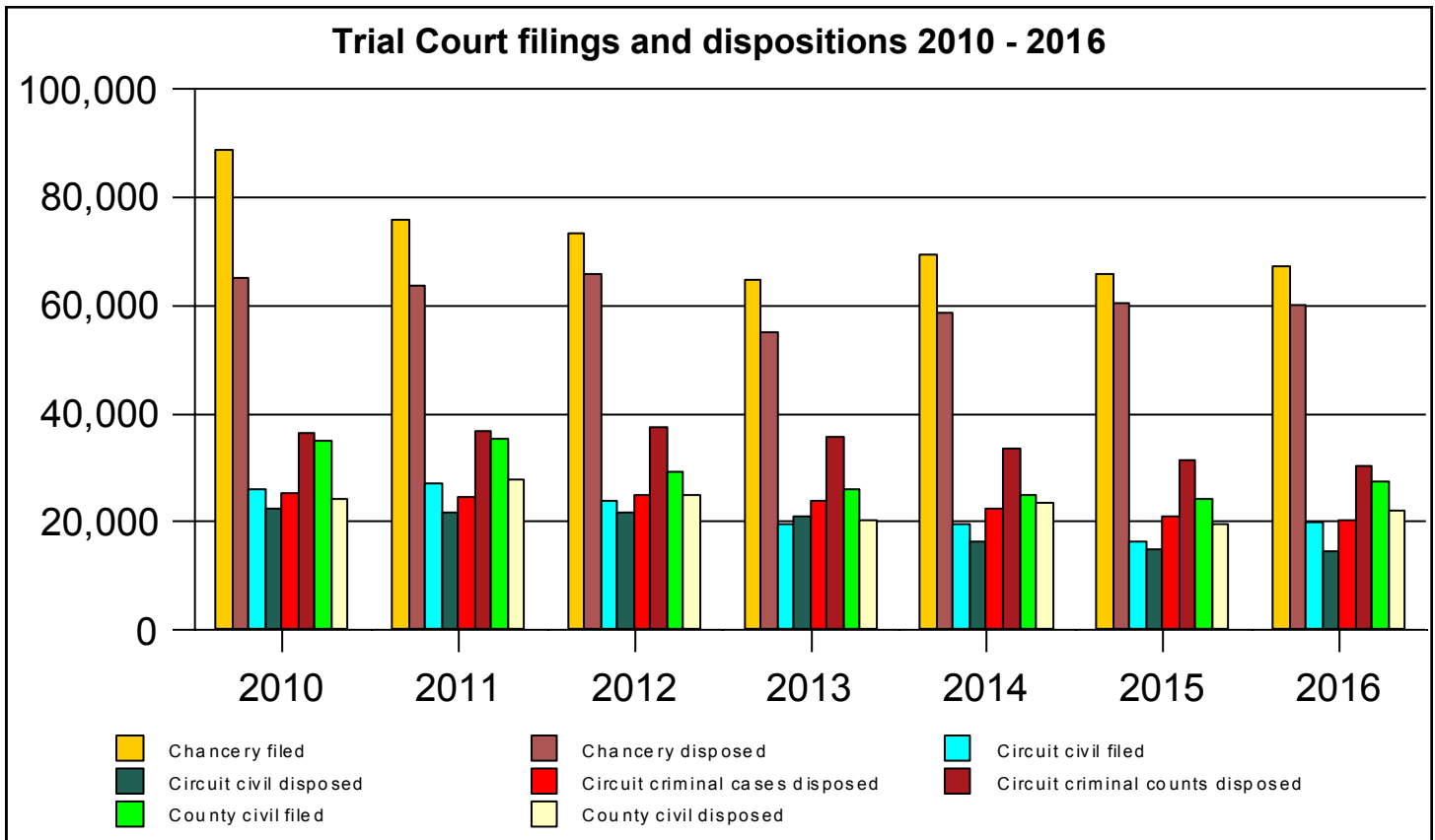
The Clerk's Office continued the work it began in October 2014 to digitally archive case files which predate the court's move to e-filing. During 2016, contract workers scanned 5,632 cases — more than double the 2015 total of 2,421. Scanning started with older cases. Scanning has been completed for court records from 2001 through 2008. Those scanned files are available online through the court's General Docket. Records scanning will continue in 2017.

MISSISSIPPI TRIAL COURTS OF RECORD

The trial courts in Mississippi without jurisdictional limits on the amounts in controversy are the Chancery and Circuit Courts. The state is divided into 20 Chancery Court Districts and 22 Circuit Court Districts. Each district has from one to four judges, depending on the size of the district and its case load.

Judicial conference leaders for 2016 include 15th District Circuit Judge Prentiss G. Harrell, chair of the Conference of Circuit Judges; 1st District Chancellor Jacqueline Mask, Chair of the Conference of Chancery Court Judges; Madison County Court Judge Ed Hannan, chair of the Conference of County Court Judges; Rankin County and Youth Court Judge Thomas Broome, chair of the Council of Youth Court Judges; and retired 20th Circuit Judge Samac Richardson, chair of the Conference of Senior Status Judges.

The courts are served by elected chancery and circuit clerks in each county. The chancery and circuit clerks for each district are required by law to report the activities of the courts to the Administrative Office of Courts. It should be pointed out that while the appellate courts report data on a calendar year, the trial court data is by fiscal year. The data, as reported, reflect the following:

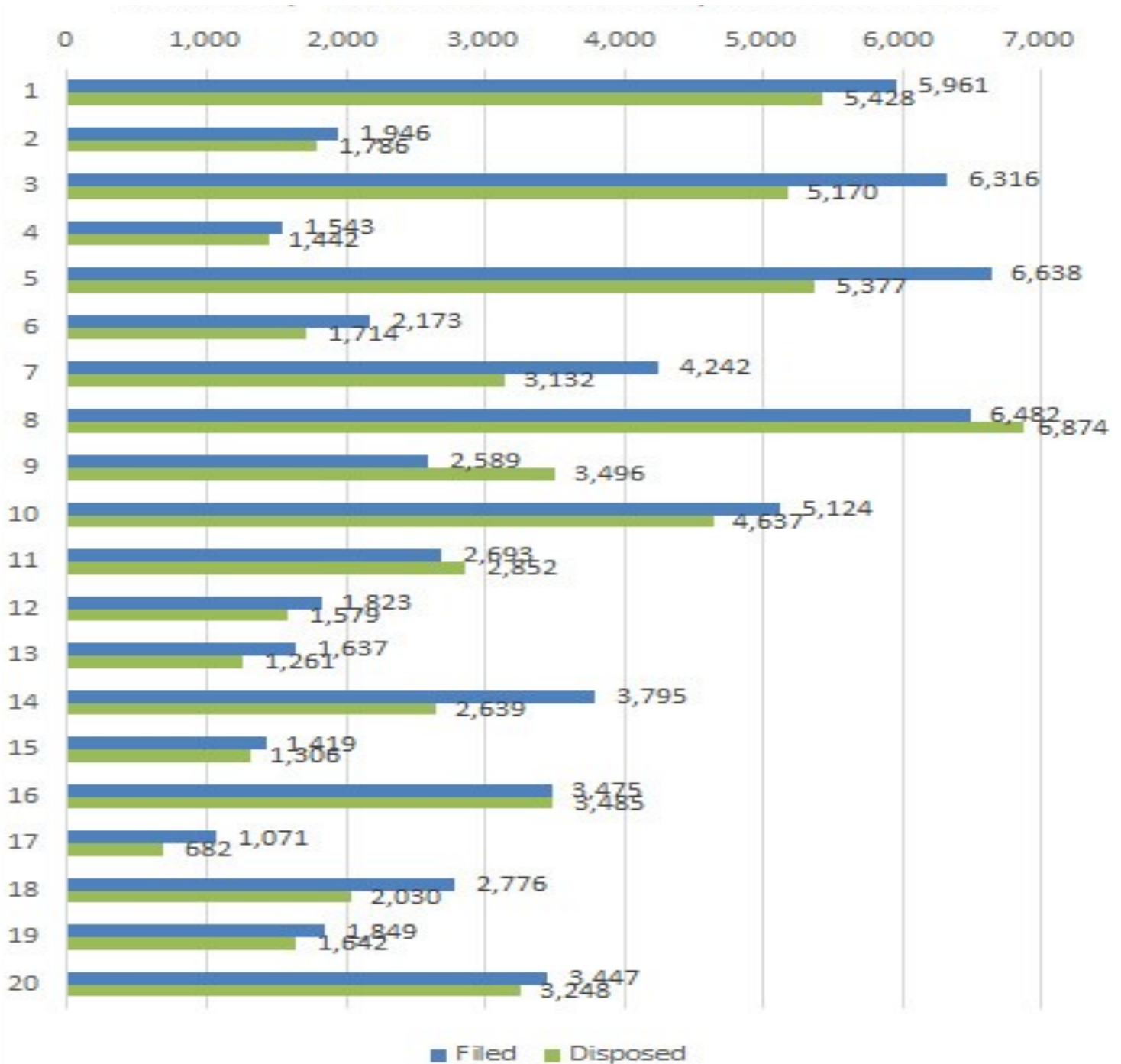


Trial Court filings and dispositions 2010 - 2016

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Chancery filed	88,424	75,558	73,268	64,515	69,100	65,589	66,999
Chancery disposed	64,994	63,349	65,782	54,817	58,573	60,192	59,780
Circuit civil filed	25,800	26,862	23,553	19,429	19,305	16,236	19,907
Circuit civil disposed	22,249	21,687	21,441	21,003	16,123	14,874	14,467
Circuit criminal cases disposed	25,258	24,371	24,917	23,851	22,229	20,703	20,188
Circuit criminal counts disposed	36,131	36,561	37,366	35,437	33,322	31,174	30,284
County civil filed	34,950	35,254	29,177	25,761	24,793	24,055	27,366
County civil disposed	24,032	27,606	24,930	20,038	23,187	19,552	21,861

CHANCERY COURTS

Chancery Cases Filed and Disposed FY 2016



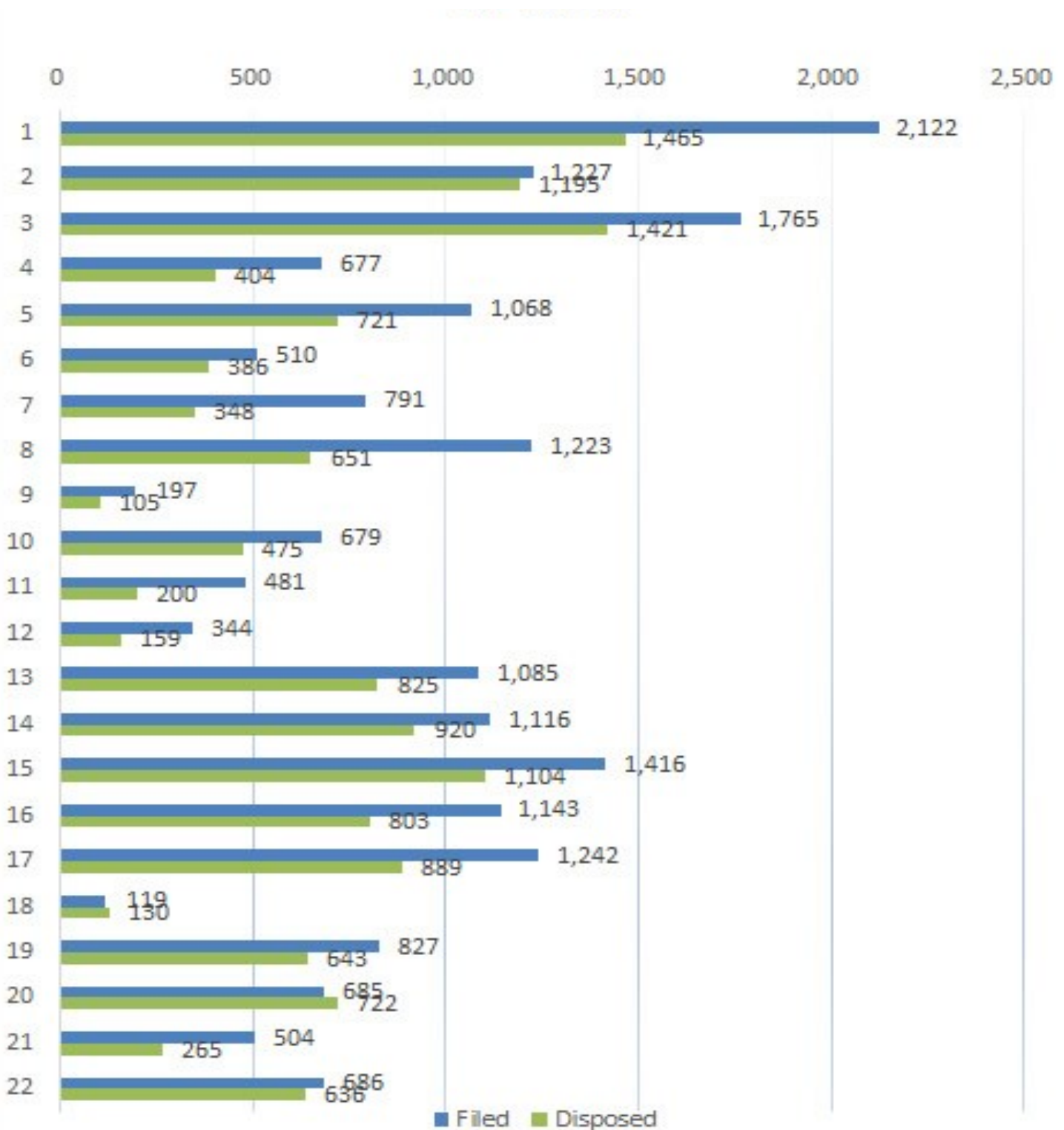
Total Chancery cases filed FY 2016 66,999

Total Chancery cases disposed FY 2016 59,780

** No FY 2016 disposition data was provided by clerks of Jefferson County Chancery Court and Wilkinson County Chancery Court.

CIRCUIT COURTS

Circuit Civil Cases Filed and Disposed FY 2016

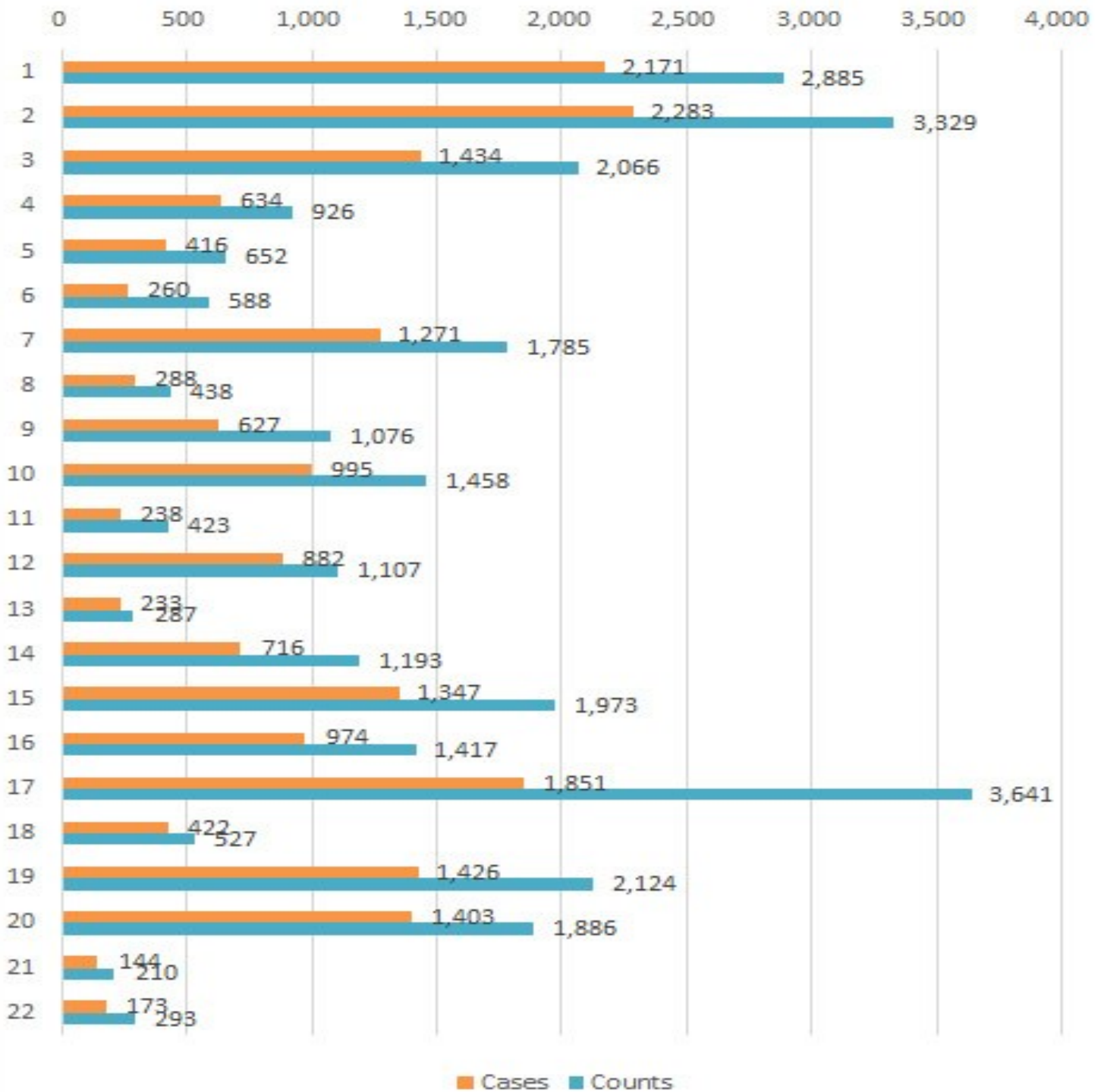


Total Circuit Civil cases reported filed FY 2016 19,907

Total Circuit Civil cases reported disposed FY 2016 14,467

CIRCUIT COURTS

Circuit Criminal Cases / Counts Disposed FY 2016

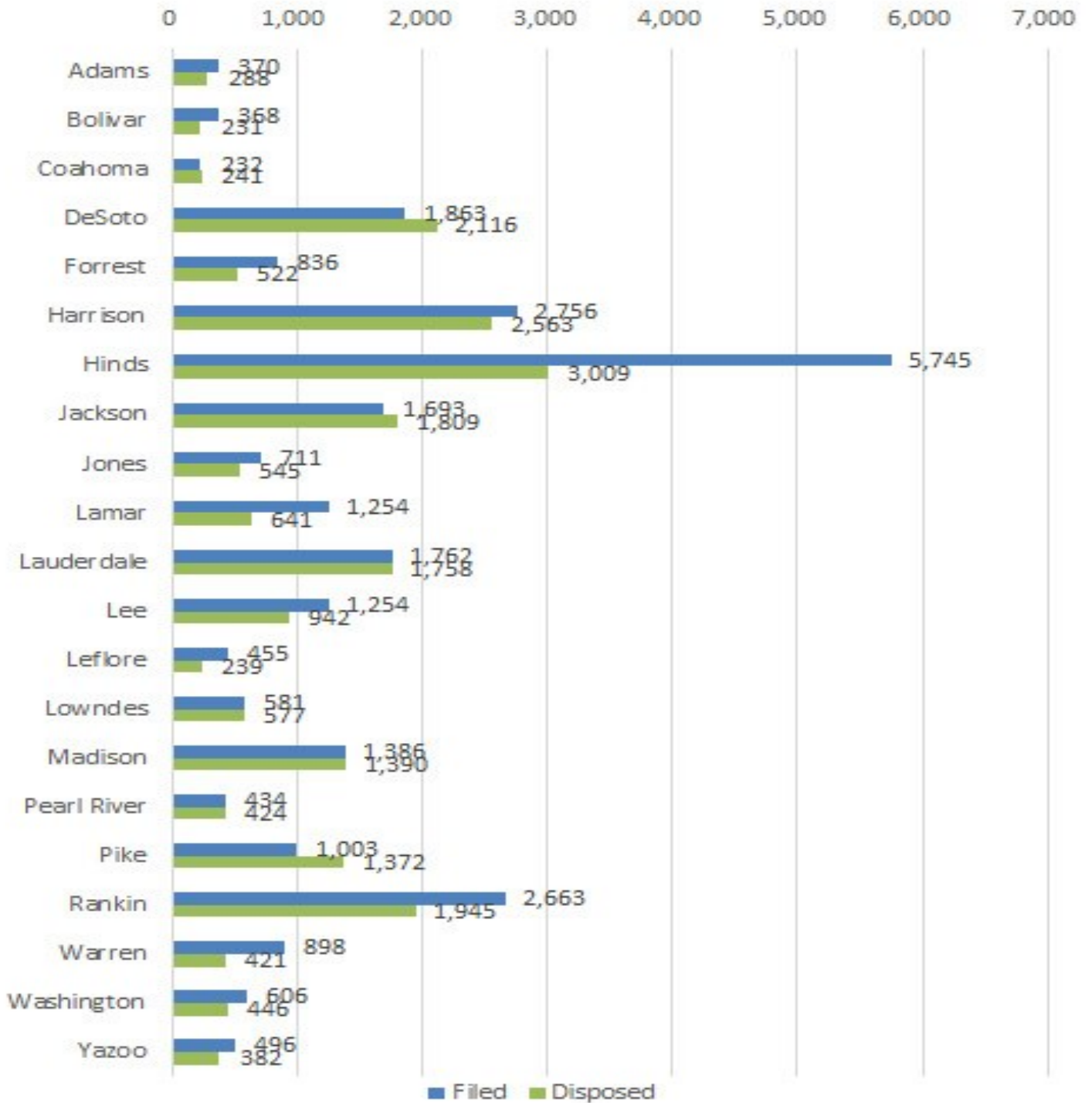


Total Circuit Criminal cases reported disposed FY 2016 20,188

Total Circuit Criminal counts reported disposed FY 2016 30,284

COUNTY COURTS

Civil Cases Filed and Disposed in County Courts FY 2016



Total County Court Civil cases reported filed FY 2016 27,366

Total County Court Civil cases reported disposed FY 2016 21,861

YOUTH COURTS, FY 2016

	Total Referrals			Formal Adjudicated Referrals			Referrals Handled Informally		
	Abuse	Neglected	Delinquent	Abuse	Neglected	Delinquent	Abuse	Neglected	Delinquent
ADAMS	16	88	390	6	43	310	10	45	80
ALCORN	25	115	153	8	76	85	17	39	68
AMITE	7	12	33	5	11	24	2	1	9
ATTALA	22	97	73	14	26	57	8	71	16
BENTON	11	22	34	0	13	33	11	9	1
BOLIVAR	85	219	235	17	48	102	68	171	133
CALHOUN	30	25	57	17	20	31	13	5	26
CARROLL	7	26	60	1	2	44	6	24	16
CHICKASAW	40	69	92	2	24	84	38	45	8
CHOCTAW	0	0	8	0	0	5	0	0	3
CLAIBORNE	2	34	65	0	10	38	2	24	27
CLARKE	102	39	26	4	5	23	98	34	3
CLAY	13	14	98	7	12	76	6	2	22
COAHOMA	56	151	249	4	19	120	52	132	129
COPIAH	120	246	171	7	46	107	113	200	64
COVINGTON	9	81	66	3	48	56	6	33	10
DESOTO	1068	1908	1807	54	96	1205	1014	1812	602
FORREST	55	297	378	11	139	184	44	158	194
FRANKLIN	3	60	64	0	19	48	3	41	16
GEORGE	2	73	81	2	58	64	0	15	17
GREENE	0	28	31	0	27	28	0	1	3
GRENADA	9	35	115	9	33	63	0	2	52
HANCOCK	158	399	501	118	280	240	40	119	261
HARRISON	1409	5011	1470	33	620	770	1376	4391	700
HINDS	347	558	725	249	446	426	97	112	299
HOLMES	15	33	101	9	15	98	6	18	3
HUMPHREYS	22	71	54	22	71	53	0	0	1
ISSAQUENA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ITAWAMBA	68	236	254	1	47	198	67	189	56
JACKSON	313	1126	681	47	235	244	266	891	437
JASPER	25	46	40	2	4	35	23	42	5
JEFFERSON	0	12	61	0	12	53	0	0	8
JEFFERSON DAVIS	27	59	30	11	44	29	16	15	1
JONES	11	94	617	6	79	491	5	15	126
KEMPER	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	1	0
LAFAYETTE	24	57	149	2	13	112	22	44	37
LAMAR	13	74	260	8	67	123	5	7	137
LAUDERDALE	29	231	613	0	116	414	29	115	199
LAWRENCE	53	90	68	9	52	56	44	38	12
LEAKE	5	4	40	2	3	35	3	1	5

	Total Referrals			Formal Adjudicated Referrals			Referrals Handled Informally		
	Abuse	Neglected	Delinquent	Abuse	Neglected	Delinquent	Abuse	Neglected	Delinquent
LEFLORE	83	180	264	10	25	185	73	155	79
LINCOLN	42	110	168	4	35	92	38	75	76
LOWNDES	6	75	296	6	72	190	0	3	106
MADISON	76	207	385	12	27	328	64	180	57
MARION	97	499	203	40	244	179	57	255	24
MARSHALL	12	103	185	10	89	148	2	14	37
MONROE	13	42	38	6	40	15	7	2	23
MONTGOMERY	26	75	48	2	10	27	24	65	21
NESHOBA	5	27	119	3	27	116	2	0	3
NEWTON	23	98	85	2	25	66	21	73	19
NOXUBEE	0	3	20	0	3	19	0	0	1
OKTIBBEHA	7	20	106	7	20	71	0	0	35
PANOLA	48	155	207	4	27	104	44	128	103
PEARL RIVER	64	409	226	9	84	133	55	325	93
PERRY	50	93	53	5	27	51	45	66	2
PIKE	103	370	270	19	149	172	84	221	98
PONTOTOC	112	501	122	1	53	113	111	448	9
PRENTISS	10	37	165	4	23	117	6	14	48
QUITMAN	0	7	67	0	7	63	0	0	4
RANKIN	260	787	662	20	390	285	240	397	377
SCOTT	1	17	105	1	16	72	0	1	33
SHARKEY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SIMPSON	26	59	108	9	46	97	17	13	11
SMITH	0	111	61	0	13	59	0	98	2
STONE	40	132	85	3	68	66	37	64	19
SUNFLOWER	89	252	327	28	61	305	61	191	22
TALLAHATCHIE	1	2	42	0	2	25	1	0	17
TATE	14	15	175	14	6	127	0	9	48
PEARL MUNICIPALITY	131	329	223	26	207	191	105	122	32
TIPPAH	12	113	106	10	100	78	2	13	28
TISHOMINGO	95	281	63	10	73	51	85	208	12
TUNICA	14	26	198	10	19	119	4	7	79
UNION	31	133	90	1	51	83	30	82	7
WALTHALL	21	95	126	6	39	71	15	56	55
WARREN	0	6	428	0	6	427	0	0	1
WASHINGTON	106	472	737	33	174	275	73	298	462
WAYNE	2	4	68	2	4	32	0	0	36
WEBSTER	50	53	18	0	2	16	50	51	2
WILKINSON	0	2	42	0	2	26	0	0	16
WINSTON	0	10	65	0	10	54	0	0	11
YALOBUSHA	12	22	61	10	15	24	2	7	37
YAZOO	6	30	230	5	27	112	1	3	118

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF COURTS

The Administrative Office of Courts was created on July 1, 1993, to support the judicial system by providing efficient administration of the non-judicial business of the state's courts. The AOC offices are located in Jackson in the Carroll Gartin Justice Building at 450 High Street. The duties of the AOC, specified in Miss. Code Ann. §§ 9-21-1, -3, -9(Rev. 2015), -11(Rev. 2015), -13, -14, -29, -43, -45, -51, -73; and §§ 9-23-3, -7, -11, -17 include:



- assist the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court with his duties as the chief administrative officer of all of the courts in the state;
- assist in the prevention of unnecessary delay in the conduct of trials of the state courts;
- promulgate standards, rules and regulations for computer and/or electronic filing and storage of all court records and court-related records maintained throughout the state in courts and in offices of circuit and chancery clerks;
- oversee the Mississippi Electronic Courts system under the direction of the Supreme Court;
- collect case statistics from all civil, criminal and youth courts in the state;
- require the filing of reports and the collection and compilation of statistical data and financial information;



- devise, promulgate and require use of a uniform youth court case tracking system, including a youth court case filing form for filing with each individual youth court matter, to be utilized by the Administrative Office of Courts and the youth courts in order that the number of youthful offenders, abused, neglected, truant and dependent children, as well as children in need of special care and children in need of supervision, may be tracked with specificity through the youth court and adult justice systems. The director shall require that all youth courts utilize the Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System, MYCIDS.
- AOC also must develop and require use of a statewide docket numbering system and uniform youth court orders and forms;
- coordinate and conduct studies and projects to improve the administration of justice;

- support the Judicial Advisory Study Committee, including research and clerical assistance;
- make recommendations regarding the state of the dockets and the effective number of judges and other court personnel;
- prescribe uniform administrative and business records, forms and systems;
- prepare budget recommendations necessary for maintenance and operation of the judicial system;
- administer the Civil Legal Assistance Fund under the direction of the Supreme Court;
- administer the Judicial System Operation Fund under the direction of the Supreme Court;
- serve as an agency to apply for and receive grants or other assistance;
- develop and implement personnel policies for non-judicial court employees;
- investigate, make recommendations concerning and assist in the securing of adequate physical accommodations for the judicial system;
- procure, distribute, exchange, transfer and assign equipment, books, forms and supplies as are acquired for the court system;



- prepare and submit an annual report on the work of the judicial system;
- make recommendations for the improvement of the operations of the judicial system;
- take necessary steps in the collection of unpaid fines and court costs;
- establish a program to facilitate the use of language interpreters in all courts of the State of Mississippi;
- certify and monitor drug courts;
- collect monthly data reports from certified drug courts, and compile an annual data summary; and
- perform any additional administrative duties assigned by the Supreme Court.

The AOC processes payroll for the support staff of the Chancery and Circuit judges, as well as the official court reporters; administers the office and rent allowances for the trial judges; maintains inventory records for equipment purchased with state funds; approves the trial judges' travel reimbursements for in-state and out-of-state travel; collects statistical data from the Chancery, Circuit, County and Youth Courts; collects data on cases handled by family masters; administers special funds for civil legal assistance, comprehensive electronic court systems, drug courts, judicial system operations and the Board of Certified Court Reporters; and oversees several federal grants awarded to the AOC for the benefit of the judiciary.

The AOC works closely with study groups created to improve the administration of justice. Groups and their work are:

Court Improvement Program (CIP) Workgroup

The Court Improvement Program (CIP) Workgroup was established in 2007 as a collaborative effort between the Administrative Office of Courts and the Department of Human Services-Division of Family and Children's Services. That cooperation continues with the Department of Child Protection Services. The CIP Workgroup meets monthly to review timeliness issues, including meeting with CPS to monitor timeliness of termination of parental rights in cases where permanent plan is adoption.

The CIP Workgroup plans joint training opportunities. Training events in 2016 included:

- One LOUD Voice, a multi-disciplinary approach to child abuse.
- the Sixth Annual Indian Child Welfare Conference. About 40 tribal leaders and more than 150 attorneys, judges, social workers and other professionals who work with Native American children in a Youth Court setting attended the ICWA conference.



- the Annual CIP Grantees Meeting and Five Year Planning Conference;
- the Annual Youth Court Judges and Referees Conference.

Problem-solving groups that have grown out of the CIP Workgroup include the Parent Representation Task Force and the Human Trafficking Task Force.

The Parent Representation Task Force developed Standards for Parent Representation and Standards of Practice for Attorneys Representing Parents. Six pilot sites provide attorneys to represent indigent parents in abuse and neglect cases that could result in termination of parental rights. Those pilot sites are Adams, DeSoto, Forrest, Hancock, Harrison, and Rankin counties. DeSoto County Youth Court became the newest parent representation site in 2016. The Task Force identified new sites for parent representation programs in Youth Courts and collaborated with Casey Family Programs and the Kellogg Foundation, which provided grant funding. The Task Force worked with the Office of State Public Defender to be the agency in charge of parent attorney representation. Parent attorneys participated in training for their role.

The Parent Representation Task Force is a collaborative effort between the judiciary, Child Protection Services, Casey Family Programs, University of Mississippi School of Law, Mississippi College School of Law, the American Bar Association, Mississippi Center for Legal Services and the Mississippi Judicial College.

The Human Trafficking Task Force worked to develop a plan to prevent child sex trafficking in Mississippi. Focus groups at the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services along with Rankin County Youth Court officials met with consultants to determine the scope of human trafficking in Mississippi and to identify other stakeholders addressing the issue in order to combine efforts.

Members of the CIP Workgroup also are involved in the Mississippi Commission on Children's Justice and the Zero-to-Three, Quality Improvement Center for Research-Based Infant-Toddler Court Teams in Forrest and Rankin counties.

State Drug Courts Advisory Committee

The State Drug Courts Advisory Committee oversees the development and operation of Mississippi's drug courts. The Advisory Committee was established by the Mississippi Legislature in 2003 to recommend improvements to drug court policies and procedures. The Advisory Committee sets funding formulas for drug courts, and it is responsible for developing statewide evaluation plans and models for monitoring critical aspects of drug court operations.

In 2015, the Advisory Committee directed its efforts to satisfying the changes in drug courts mandated 35 by



sentencing reform. Data collection and reporting measures were implemented. The requirement that all drug courts be recertified by July 31, 2015, was met after site inspections and assessments were made of each drug court. The requirement that all drug courts follow evidence based practices is being addressed with the implementation of newly published “Best Practices.”

Judicial Advisory Study Committee

The 21-member Judicial Advisory Study Committee was established by the Legislature in 1993 to make policy recommendations to the Supreme Court and the Legislature to promote improvements to the administration of justice and the operation of the courts.

During 2016, the Study Committee unanimously approved a resolution in support of House Bill 2728 to create a statewide County Court system. Although the proposed legislation did not pass, the Study Committee noted that a statewide system is needed to remedy a disparity in services provided to children. Part-time Youth Court referees serve most of the 61 counties that do not have County Courts. The referee courts do not have adequate time or resources to devote to the needs of at-risk youth.

The Study Committee voted unanimously to support revisions to the termination of parental rights statutes set out in House Bill 1240. The 2016 Legislature adopted revisions to the TPR laws, including remedying provisions in Mississippi Code Section 93-15-103 that had prevented termination of parental rights against an offending parent, even if noncustodial, if the child had not been removed from the home, and had prevented adoption by other relatives. The TPR revisions addressed and clarified issues of venue, proceedings, parties and procedures. The revisions changed the criteria for involuntary termination of parental rights, making them consistent with federal laws that affect funding.

The Study Committee, under the leadership of Chairman Eugene L. Fair of the Court of Appeals and Vice-Chair G. Gerald Cruthird, began to look at how mental health issues are dealt with in the courts. The Study Committee noted the challenge of evaluating competency in a timely manner for defendants charged with crimes. Only 15 beds are available for criminal evaluations at the Mississippi State Hospital at Whitfield. The Study Committee may seek a federal grant to further study this issue.

The Study Committee discussed mental health courts as a problem-solving alternative. The Study Committee is interested in looking at models from other states. The Study Committee noted that Circuit Judge Prentiss Harrell obtained a federal grant that allowed the 15th Circuit Court to set up a mental health component within its Drug Court. New topics that the Study Committee expects to explore in the future include courtroom security, reentry courts for offenders, and the issue of judicial discretion in matters of registration of one-time youthful sex offenders.



BOARD OF BAR ADMISSIONS

The Board of Bar Admissions has the primary obligation to administer the laws and rules governing admission to practice law in Mississippi. The Board’s efforts are primarily focused on the preparation, administration and evaluation of twice yearly Bar admission examinations, which are given in February and July, and on the investigation and evaluation of the character and fitness of each person seeking admission to practice law in the state of Mississippi.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bar Exam Applications							
Applications for registration as law student	104	105	69	66	92	61	27
Applications for examination	413	420	426	433	385	318	343
Admission on motion					46	30	46
Total applications processed/being processed	517	525	495	499	523	409	416
Bar Exams							
Took February bar exam	87	101	108	108	111	98	95
Passed February bar exam		66	71	76	90	70	62
Failed February bar exam		35	37	32	21	28	33
Took July bar exam	253	242	231	238	183	188	181
Passed July bar exam		185	178	190	143	145	128
Failed July bar exam		57	53	48	40	43	53
Total who took bar exam	340	343	339	346	294	286	276
Total who passed bar exam	259	251	249	266	233	215	190
Total who failed bar exam	81	92	90	80	61	71	86

In 2016, the Board processed 27 applications for registration as law students, and 343 applications for examination. There were 46 motions for admission by reciprocity. Attorneys licensed in other states and having five years of active practice are exempt from taking the bar exam if the licensing state has a reciprocity agreement.

A total of 276 people took the Bar Exam in 2016. The pass rate was 68.8 percent, down from the previous year when 75.1 percent passed.

COMMISSION ON CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

The Mississippi Commission on Continuing Legal Education (CLE) has the primary responsibility to exercise general supervisory authority over the administration of the Rules for Mandatory Continuing Legal Education and to adopt, repeal and amend regulations consistent with these rules. The objective of the Commission on CLE is to ensure that each member of the Mississippi Bar complies with the rules and regulations established by the Commission and meets the mandatory CLE requirements in a timely and efficient manner. Twelve (12) hours of approved instruction are required annually of every attorney licensed to practice law in Mississippi. Newly admitted attorneys are required to attend a specific new lawyer program within the first two years of practice.

The Commission strives to meet the needs of the members of the Mississippi Bar regarding continuing legal education by keeping abreast of national changes in programming formats and topics. Members of the Commission and its administrator are active in the national organization of regulatory CLE boards, CLEreg.

In 2016, the Commission on CLE approved for credit 564 live programs that were held in the state of Mississippi, 2,836 live programs held outside the state of Mississippi and 4,844 programs that were given by satellite, teleconference or online through live webcasts and on-demand programs.