

**SUPREME COURT
OF
MISSISSIPPI
2019 Annual Report**



SUPREME COURT OF MISSISSIPPI

2019 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 comprise the trial courts of record; and two appellate courts, the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court, which is Mississippi's court of last resort.

There are 82 Justice Courts with 198 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 241 Municipal Courts with 207 judges. Some judges serve more than one local municipality. 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.

In 2019, there were 22 County Courts with 32 judges. County 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.

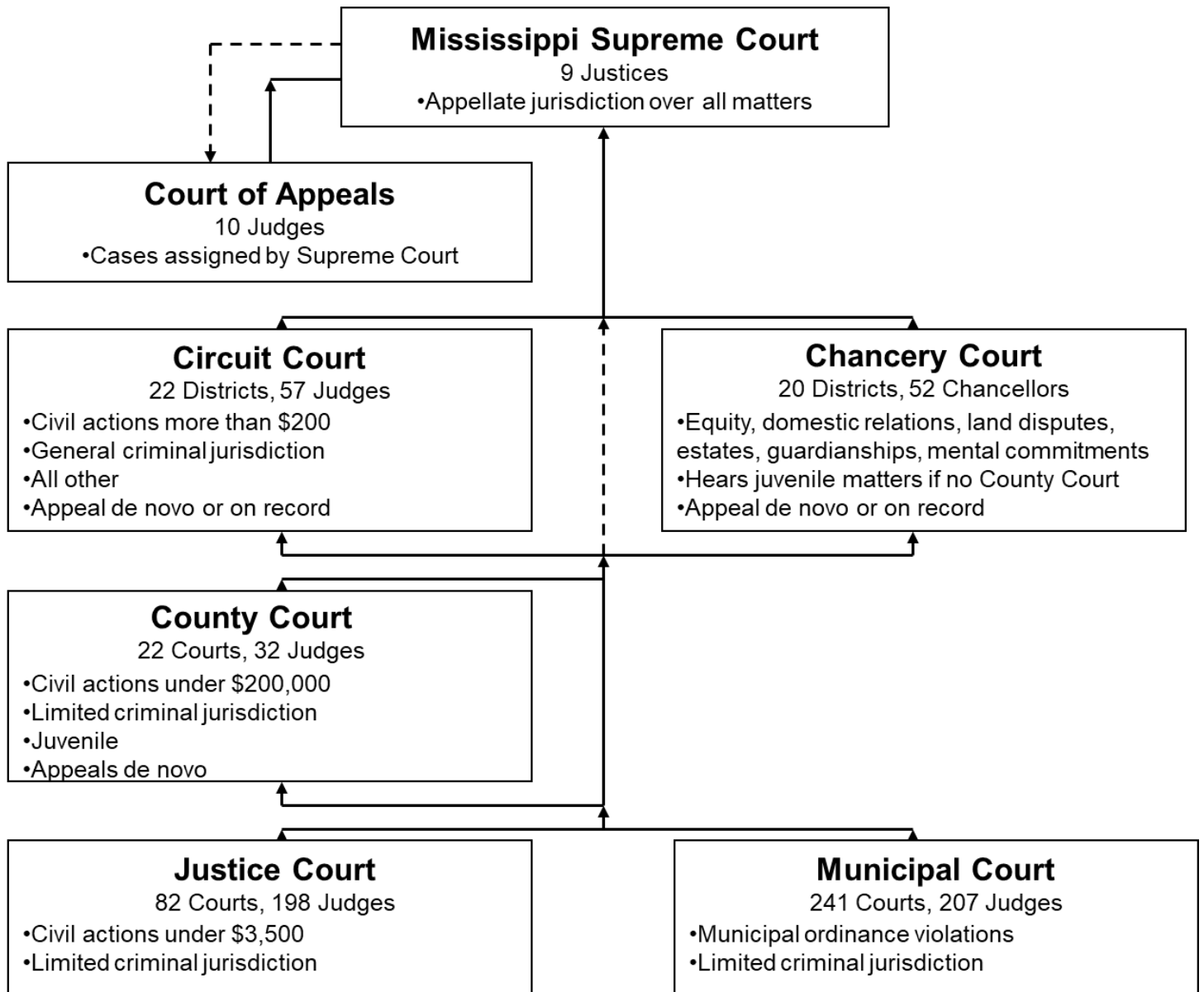
There are Chancery Courts in each county, which are organized into 20 districts with 52 chancellors. They have jurisdiction over matters of equity, domestic relations, land disputes, estates, guardianships and mental commitments. In counties without County Courts, the Chancery Courts handle Youth Court 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.

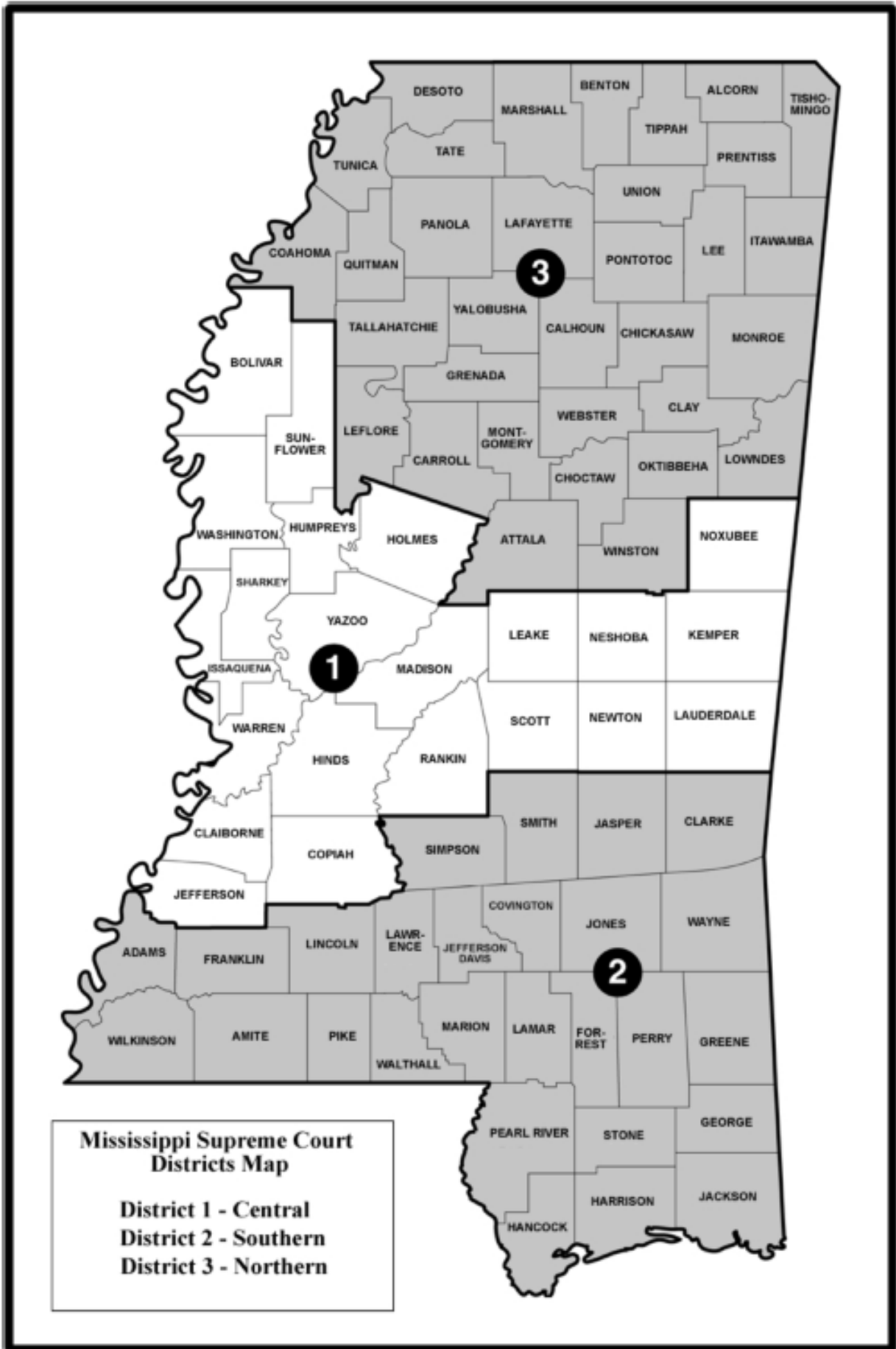
Appeals from the Chancery, Circuit, and, in limited situations, the County Courts are taken to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court may either retain the appeal or assign it to the Court of Appeals. Generally, the Supreme Court retains cases involving issues of first impression and cases involving interpretation of the Constitution, statutes or regulations. The Supreme Court also retains appeals of death penalties, annexations, bar discipline, bond issues, election contests, judicial performance matters, utility rates, and certified questions from federal court.

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.

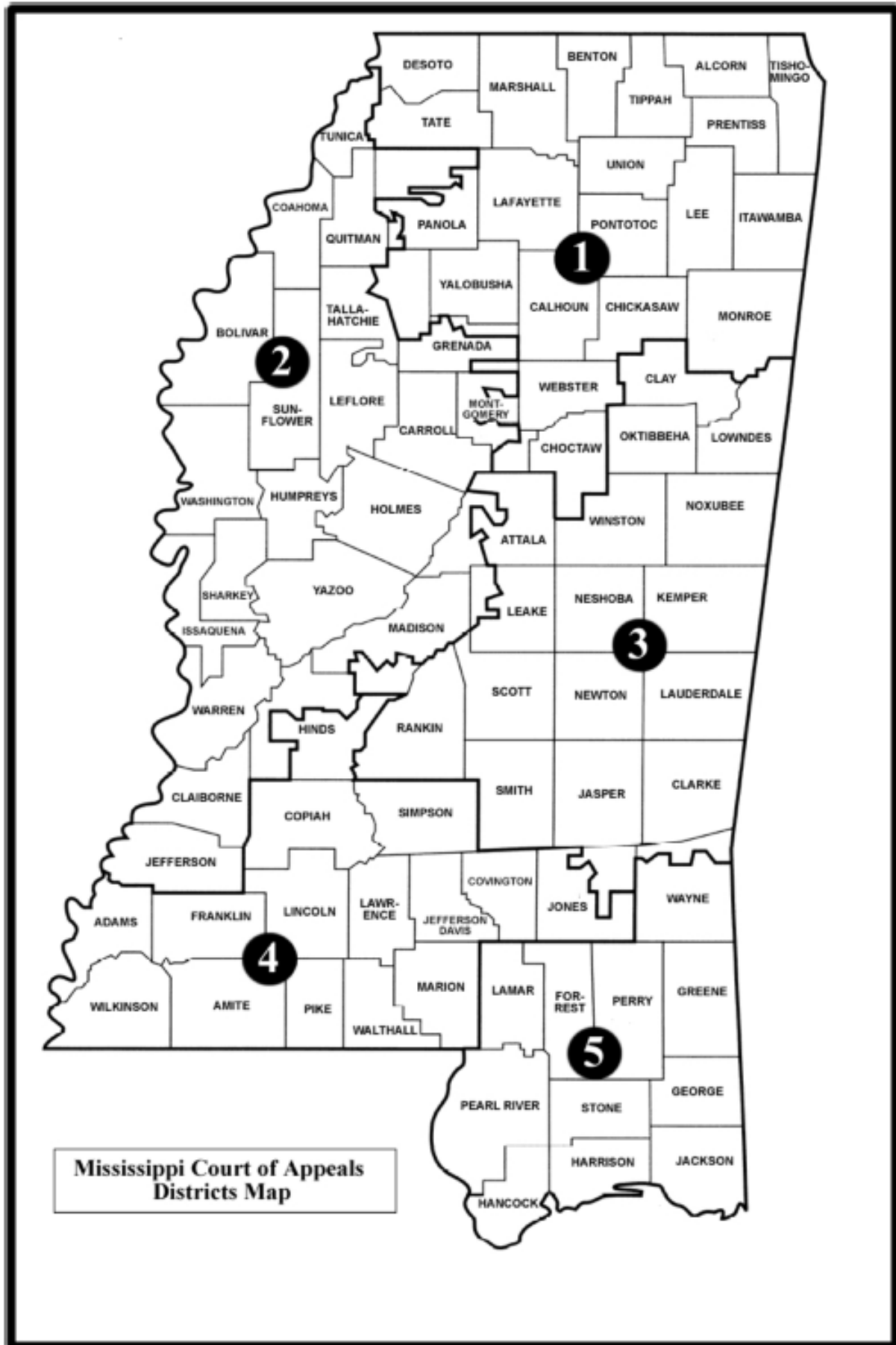
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
of the
MISSISSIPPI JUDICIARY
in 2019



SUPREME COURT DISTRICTS

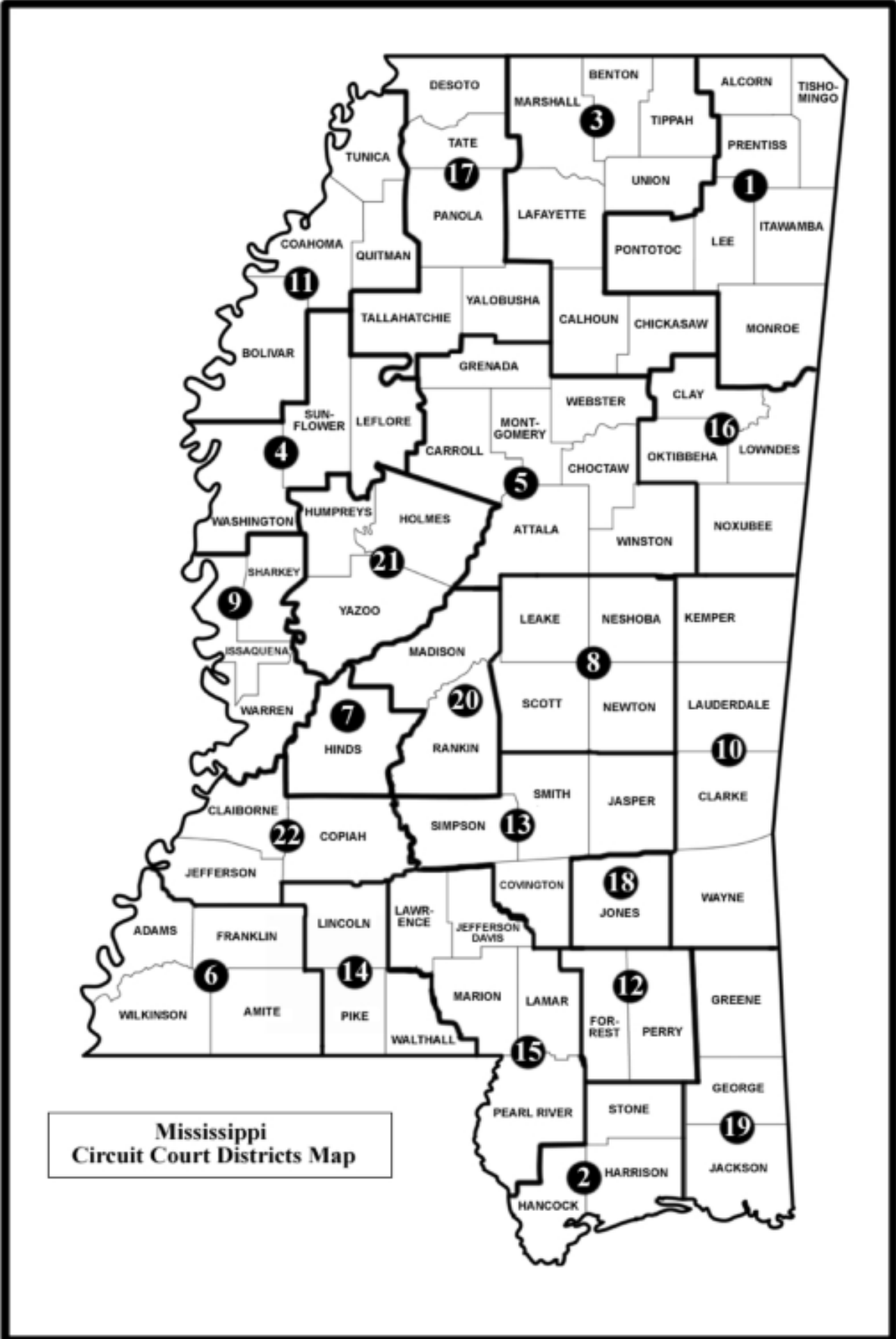


COURT OF APPEALS DISTRICTS



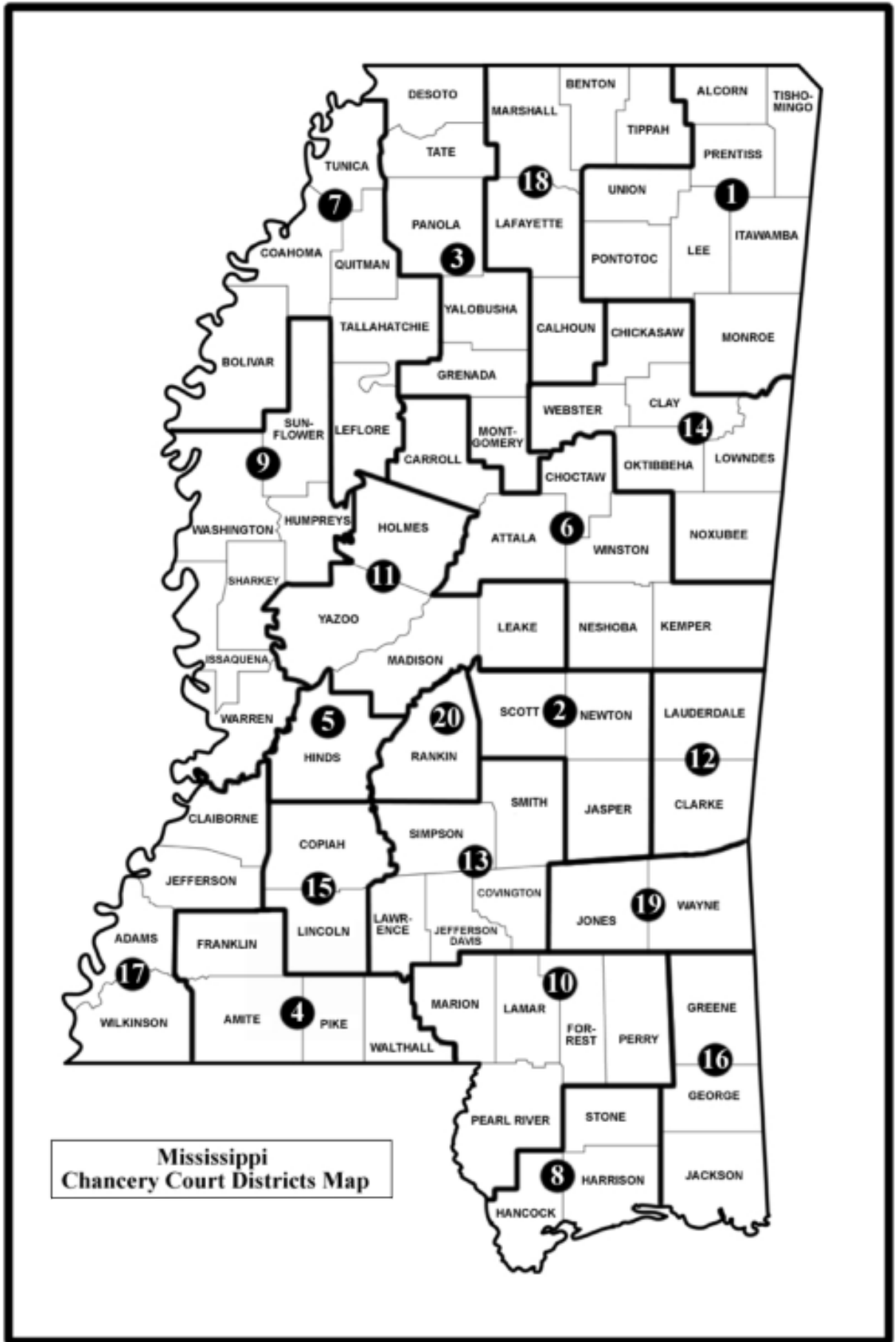
Mississippi Court of Appeals Districts Map

CIRCUIT COURT DISTRICTS

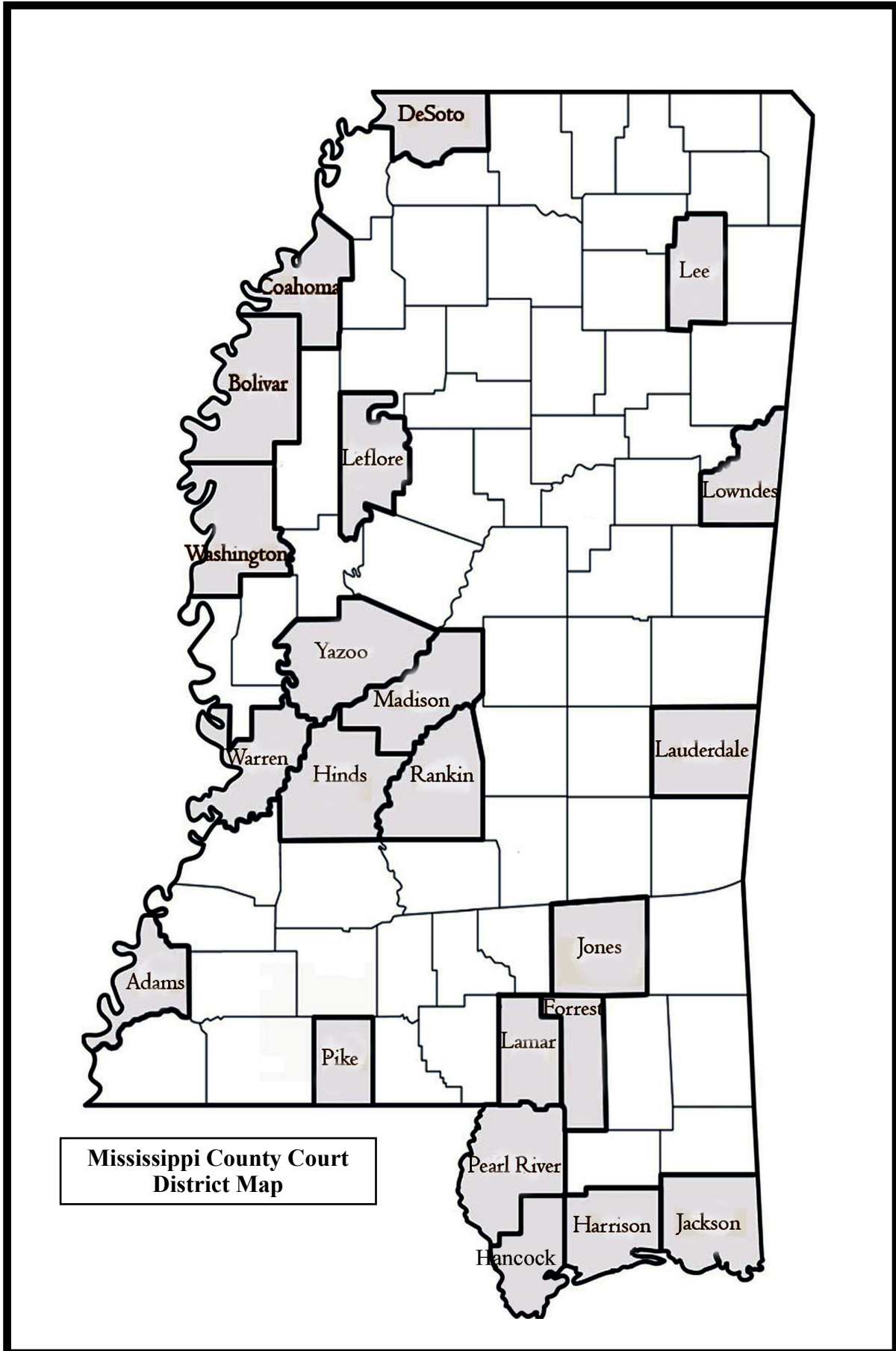


Mississippi
Circuit Court Districts Map

CHANCERY COURT DISTRICTS



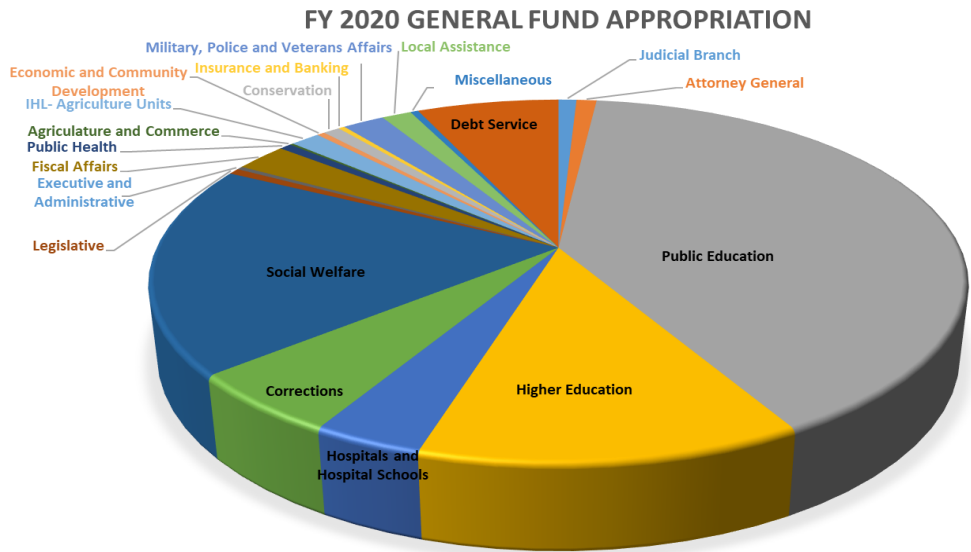
COUNTIES WHICH HAVE COUNTY COURTS



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.



(DOES NOT INCLUDE FY2019 REAPPROPRIATIONS)

Judicial Branch	48,711,181		0.8484%
Attorney General	54,344,448		0.9466%
Total Judiciary and Justice per LBO		103,055,629	
Other:			
Public Education	2,295,413,943		39.9812%
Higher Education	739,089,219		12.8734%
Hospitals and Hospital Schools	213,668,778		3.7217%
Corrections	316,474,500		5.5123%
Social Welfare	1,074,029,975		18.7073%
Legislative	30,193,400		0.5259%
Executive and Administrative	16,809,235		0.2928%
Fiscal Affairs	142,994,685		2.4907%
Public Health	32,783,179		0.5710%
Agriculture and Commerce	8,873,819		0.1546%
IHL- Agriculture Units	81,049,821		1.4117%
Economic and Community Development	21,517,776		0.3748%
Conservation	45,621,145		0.7946%
Insurance and Banking	17,443,888		0.3038%
Military, Police and Veterans Affairs	114,441,495		1.9933%
Local Assistance	80,625,992		1.4043%
Miscellaneous	21,904,129		0.3815%
Debt Service	385,241,392		6.7101%
Total Other		5,638,176,371	
Total General Fund Appropriation FY2020		5,741,232,000	100.00%

The total 2020 Fiscal Year appropriation for the judicial branch was \$84,066,503, which consists of \$48,711,181 in general funds, \$790,000 in capital expense funds and \$34,562,322 in 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 2020 general fund appropriations for all three branches of state government was \$5,741,232,000.

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 22 county courts, was \$48,711,181.

The judicial system's largest expenditure is salaries: \$60,975,034, or 72.53 percent of the entire judicial branch budget, including General Fund and Special Fund appropriations.

Judicial salaries are set by Mississippi Code § 25-3-3, which includes salaries of elected judiciary, district attorneys and legal assistants, with the exception of County Court judges, whose salaries are governed by Mississippi Code § 9-9-11. The 2012 Legislature enacted a revision to § 25-3-3 that established incremental pay raises. The last incremental judicial pay raise went into effect on January 1, 2016.

Mississippi Code § 25-9-115 says that the State Personnel Board shall report to the Legislature recommendations for judicial salaries. "From and after November 1, 2017, and every four (4) years thereafter, the State Personnel Board shall prepare a written report to the Legislature that examines, evaluates and recommends an adequate level of compensation for the justices of the Supreme Court, the judges of the Court of Appeals, the judges of the chancery and circuit courts, the judges of the county courts, judicial staff attorneys, and law clerks. In preparing the report, the board shall consider all appropriate factors including, but not limited to, comparative judicial, judicial staff attorney, and law clerk salaries in neighboring states and in the Southeast as a

whole; comparative judicial, judicial staff attorney, and law clerk salaries in the federal judiciary; salaries of comparable professionals in government, academia, private law practice and the corporate sector; changes in public sector spending; rates of inflation; and the overall economic climate.” However, no salary increase has been enacted.

Special funds are critical to the work of the judicial branch. Mississippi Electronic Courts, MEC, an electronic filing system 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 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.

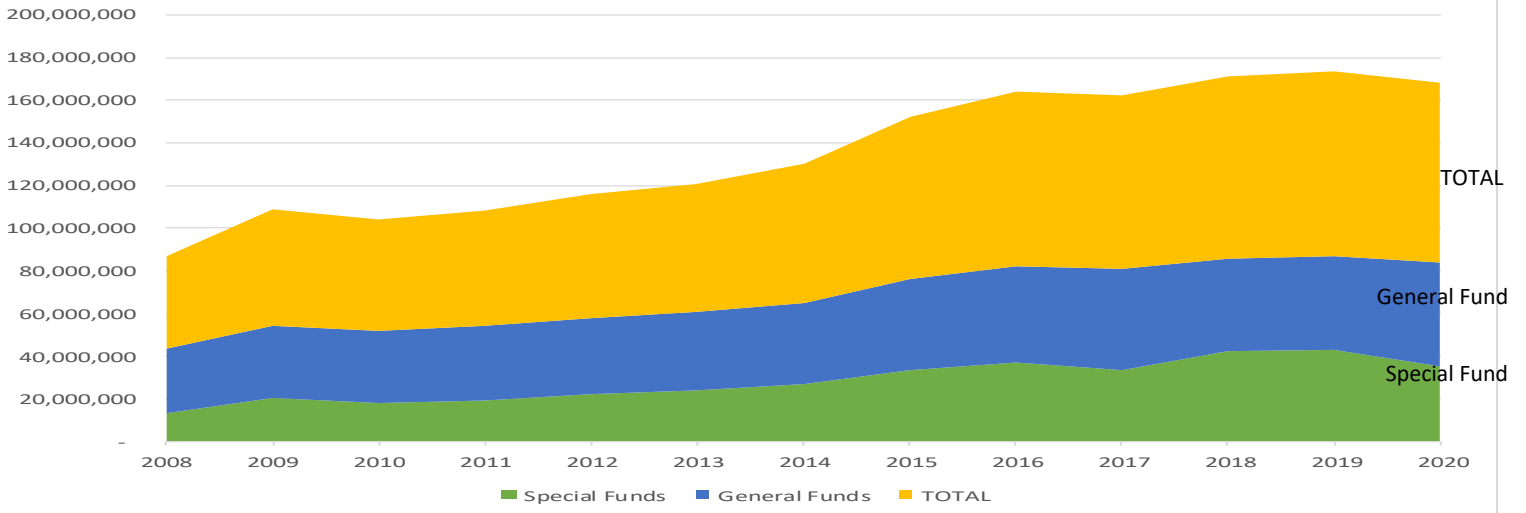
The largest special fund category is the custodial account that pays trial court support staff. County governments pay a portion of the salaries of trial court support staff under Mississippi Code Section 9-1-36. The custodial account is a pass-through for county funds totaling \$16,851,849.

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.

Judicial Salaries	
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 -- Most counties pay \$1,000 less than Chancery and Circuit Judges.	

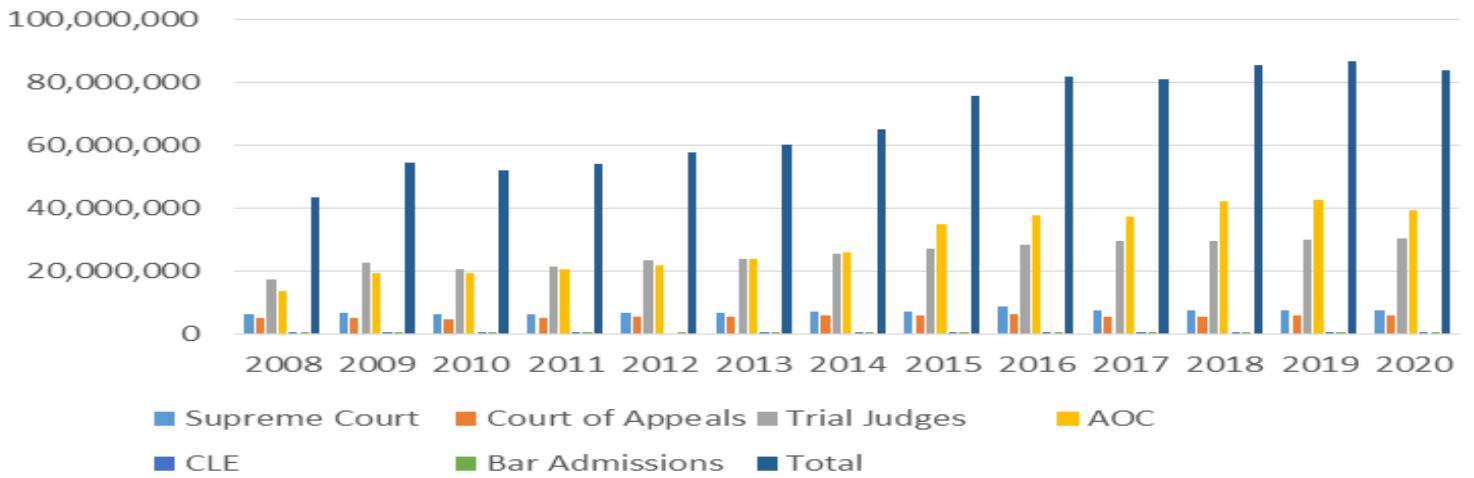
JUDICIAL BRANCH FY 2020 BUDGET								
	Supreme Court	Court of Appeals	Trial Judges	Admin Office of Courts	Continuing Legal Education	Board of Bar Admissions	Totals	%
Salaries	6,626,931	5,550,577	28,278,022	20,210,087	123,610	185,807	60,975,034	72.53 %
Travel	344,000	387,175	854,586	95,450	11,200	21,500	1,713,911	2.04 %
Contractual	238,926	65,775	131,500	2,669,826	11,728	100,693	3,218,448	3.83 %
Commodities	469,126	9,725	1,089,000	27,335	2,800	38,100	1,636,086	1.95 %
Equipment	-	-	-	88,860	-	-	88,860	0.11 %
Subsidies	-	-	-	16,434,164	-	-	16,434,164	19.55 %
Judicial Branch Appropriation	7,678,983	6,013,252	30,353,108	39,525,722	149,338	346,100	84,066,503	100 %
General Funds	6,741,513	4,424,396	26,160,740	11,384,532	-	-	48,711,181	57.94 %
Capital Expense Fund	-	-	-	790,000	-	-	790,000	0.94 %
Special Funds	937,470	1,588,856	4,192,368	27,351,190	149,338	346,100	34,565,322	41.12 %
Judicial Branch Appropriation	7,678,983	6,013,252	30,353,108	39,525,722	149,338	346,100	84,066,503	100 %
No. of PINS	70	58	109	33	2	3	275	

General Fund and Special Fund Comparison FY 2008-2020



	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
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	42,376,804	42,971,615	35,355,322
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	43,094,842	43,665,574	48,711,181
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	85,471,646	86,637,189	84,066,503

Judiciary Annual Budgets, FY 2008 - 2020



Fiscal Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Supreme Court	6,453,687	6,546,560	6,191,709	6,504,661	6,688,507	6,804,905	7,088,365	7,266,019	8,982,639	7,658,703	7,418,303	7,512,227	7,678,983
Court of Appeals	5,127,570	5,130,570	4,878,956	5,063,906	5,388,381	5,539,485	5,818,158	6,063,132	6,189,265	5,632,021	5,703,898	5,877,195	6,013,252
Trial Judges	17,406,230	22,799,216	20,811,115	21,451,492	23,446,877	23,776,367	25,482,413	27,195,343	28,346,791	29,762,816	29,762,816	29,950,910	30,353,108
AOC	13,877,210	19,438,559	19,592,868	20,560,547	21,831,819	23,858,746	26,115,394	34,885,208	37,806,442	37,479,253	42,103,854	42,813,752	39,525,722
CLE	125,256	123,978	124,046	139,646	134,968	130,193	135,538	138,651	183,386	144,282	144,282	144,414	149,338
Bar Admissions	342,680	373,618	373,788	378,088	371,438	351,138	406,515	402,586	401,671	338,493	338,493	338,691	346,100
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	85,471,646	86,637,189	84,066,503



Intervention Courts

The 2019 Legislature, as part of the Criminal Justice Reform Act, called for additional intervention courts to include veterans drug intervention and mental health intervention courts. The vote in the House of Representatives was 110 - 5 on House Bill 1352; the Senate vote was 49 - 2. Funding was not included in the legislation.

2019 Fiscal Year Drug Intervention Court Data	
	2019
Total drug intervention court programs	40
Total people served by drug intervention courts statewide during year	4,370
Total drug intervention court graduates	852
Felony adult program graduates	625
Misdemeanor adult program graduates	54
Juvenile court program graduates	145
Family court program graduates	28
Total left program before completion	601
Charged with new offense while in program	180
Convicted of new crime	19
Drug-free babies born to participants	52
Participants who earned GED or high school equivalency certificate	261
Obtained employment	858
Fines collected and returned to county general funds	\$1,571,619.78
Fees paid by participants	\$2,057,337.15
Hours of community service work by participants	30,631.8

The Administrative Office of Courts General Fund appropriated budget for FY2020 included \$6.5 million, of which \$6.1 million was allocated for the adult felony, misdemeanor, youth, and family drug court budgets. This fiscal year budget spanned July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020. The FY 2020 budget also included \$540,000 in one-time funding received for the purchase of a new Drug Court Case Management system. DCCM has been the drug court case management system since 2006. AOC looked at options to upgrade capabilities and functions.

Intervention courts provide an enormous savings to the state budget. Avoided incarceration costs amounted to a gross savings of \$474,900,000 during the past eight years and six months. With their requirement that participants pay all their fines and fees, intervention courts also return money to the counties by collecting fines. Participants are unable to graduate until outstanding fines and fees are paid in full. The total fines collected for FY19 was \$1,571,619.78, and the total fees collected was \$2,057,337.15. The total fines collected for the first six months of FY20, through December 2019, was \$579,071.99, and the total fees collected was \$835,730.91.

At the end of December 2019, the state had 40 intervention courts. There were 22 adult felony drug court programs –

one in each of the 22 Circuit Court districts. There were three adult misdemeanor drug court programs, 12 juvenile drug courts and three family drug courts.

Two special programs for veterans operated under the direction of the 12th Circuit and 19th Circuit drug intervention courts. The Legislature's adoption of Mississippi Code Section 9-25-1, effective July 1, 2014, authorized the Veterans Treatment Court Program to provide special services for military veterans. The veterans treatment courts operate similarly to drug court, with the additional component of retired military veteran mentors. The programs take into account that veterans who suffer from drug and alcohol dependency or addiction and co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse problems may also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and depression and other issues related to their military service.

The Mississippi Legislature authorized the creation of mental health intervention courts in 2017 when it passed the Rivers McGraw Mental Health Diversion Pilot Program, Mississippi Code Sections 9-27-1 — 9-27-21, effective April 11, 2017. The AOC was authorized to oversee the pilot program. However, no funds were appropriated for operations or oversight, and Mississippi has limited access to federally regulated medically assisted treatment facilities.

The state's 40 drug intervention courts served 4,370 people during FY 2019, with 852 people graduating from the programs. Program participants gave birth to 52 drug-free babies.

During the past seven fiscal years, intervention courts graduated 5,624 participants. Accomplishments of drug court participants during that seven-year period include:

- 477 attended vocational schools;
- 750 attended traditional schools;
- 1,321 attended post-secondary schools;
- 431 earned GEDs;
- 4,027 gained employment;
- 1,121 obtained driver licenses;
- 528 drug-free babies were born, increasing the savings to the state. According to a study conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, each healthy, drug-free infant saves the state an average of \$750,000 during the first 18 years of life. Drug courts will save an additional \$39 million over the next 18 years by avoiding the costs associated with caring for children exposed to drugs before they are born.

AOC recertified the 22 adult felony drug intervention courts in 2019, as required by Mississippi Code Section 9-23-11. The review process is undertaken at two-year intervals. Mississippi law requires the intervention courts to meet standards that include evidence-based practices that reduce dependency on drugs or alcohol. To earn recertification, programs must show that they deliver appropriate intervention services. Intervention courts can't pick just the easy cases for admission to a program. State law requires "targeting medium to high-risk offenders for participation." Programs must utilize risk and needs assessment tools to identify people eligible for the services of an intervention court.

State Intervention Courts Advisory Committee

The State Drug Courts Advisory Committee was established by the Mississippi Legislature in 2003 to develop and periodically update proposed statewide evaluation plans and models for monitoring all critical aspects of drug courts. The Advisory Committee is now known as the State Intervention Courts Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee may make recommendations for improvements to drug intervention court policies and procedures including the drug intervention court certification process. The committee may make suggestions as to the criteria for eligibility and other procedural and substantive guidelines for drug court operation. The Advisory Committee sets funding formulas for drug intervention courts. The Advisory Committee shall act as arbiter of disputes arising out of the operation of drug intervention courts established under Mississippi Code Section 9-23-9. It shall also make recommendations to the Supreme Court necessary and incident to compliance with established rules.

Members of the Advisory Committee for 2019-2020 were AOC Director Kevin Lackey, committee chair; Justice Robert Chamberlin; 3rd Circuit Judge Andrew Howorth; 7th Circuit Judge Winston Kidd; 11th Circuit Judge Charles Webster; 12th Circuit Judge Robert Helfrich; 14th Circuit Judge Mike Taylor; Jackson County Court Judge Sharon Sigalas; Rep Angela Cock-erham; Christy Gutherz, Mississippi Department of Corrections Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections; and Melody Madaris, Director of Substance Abuse and EAP Services at Communicare, Region II. Advisory Committee members are appointed by the Supreme Court to two-year terms.

Mississippi Electronic Courts

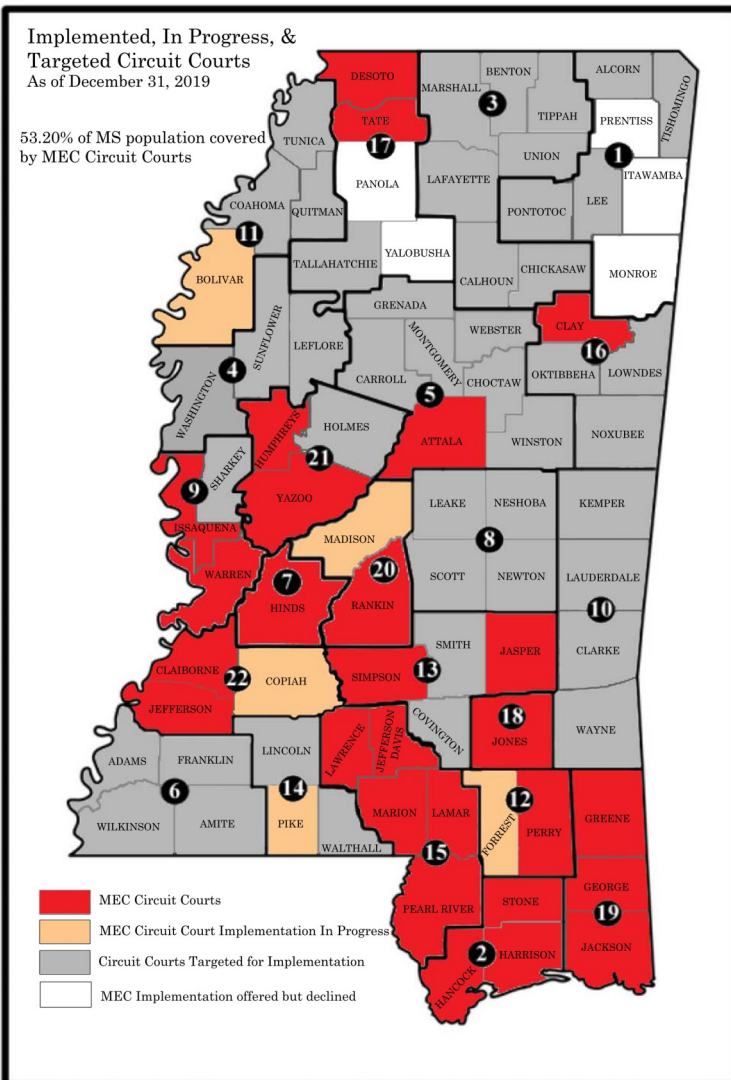
The Mississippi Electronic Courts system, MEC, under the supervision of the Mississippi Supreme Court, is adapted from the electronic filing and case management system used in federal district and appellate courts. MEC allows courts to file, store and manage case files in an electronic format which is accessible via the Internet to judges, court staff, attorneys and the public 24 hours a day.

At the end of 2019, MEC was utilized in 67 Chancery Courts that cover 85.36 percent of the state's population, 28 Circuit Courts that cover 53.2 percent of the state's population, and 12 County Courts. A total of 107 out of 186 Chancery, Circuit, and County courts were online and being supported by MEC. During 2019, the nine remaining Chancery Courts willing to implement the free e-filing and case management system were brought on to MEC. The remaining 15 Chancery Courts have declined MEC implementation. Five new Circuit Courts and one new County Court implemented MEC in 2019s. Also, two Circuit and County courts which had previously used MEC only for civil filings implemented criminal case filing in MEC. MEC's implementation focus for 2020 will be bringing on Circuit Courts that would like to implement MEC without waiting on the MEC accounting project development to be completed.

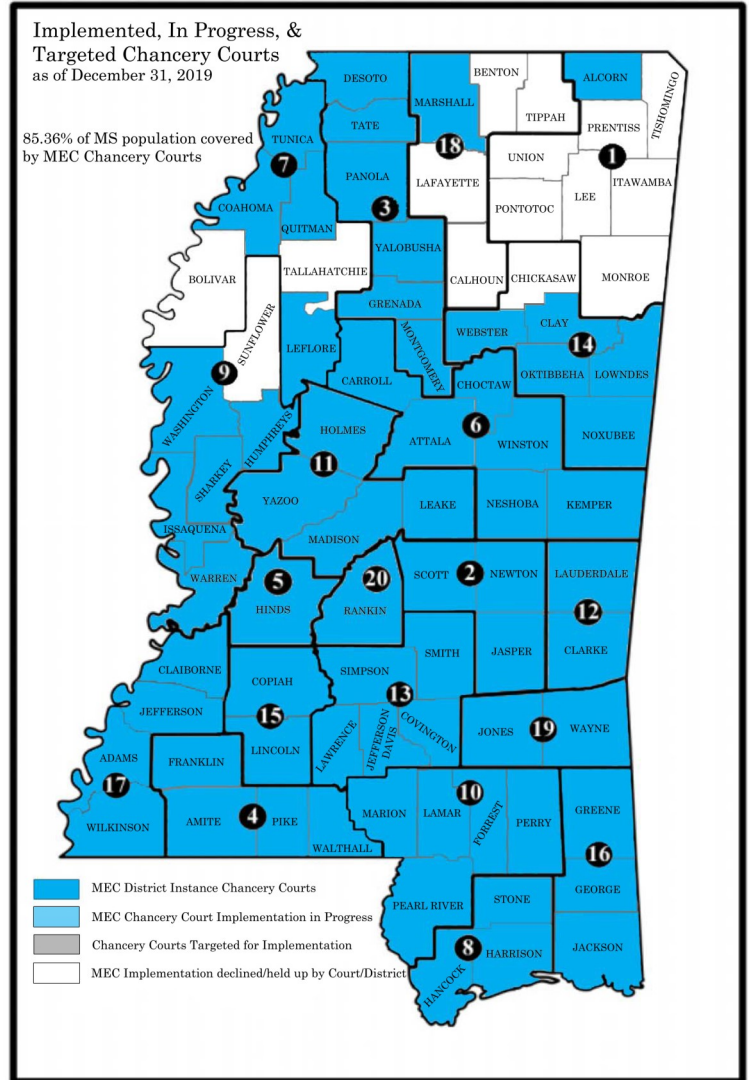
The GAP Act, which went into effect Jan. 1, 2020, required modifications in MEC. MEC implemented numerous system changes which were required to track new filings and new deadlines under the GAP Act. MEC is still developing the automated electronic form notices to responsible parties/attorneys and anticipates this function will be deployed with the next MEC system release. The ultimate goal of this project is to minimize the impact of all of the new legal requirements which the GAP Act placed on court staff (clerks and chambers) and attorneys by automating as many of the new responsibilities and reminders/notices as possible using MEC.

The MEC judgment roll was deployed to the 15th Circuit Court District for pilot testing and feedback in October 2019.

Mississippi Circuit Court Districts MEC Implementation Map



Mississippi Chancery Court Districts MEC Implementation Map



Feedback from the courts in the 15th Circuit led to identification of additional functionality development required. The pilot of the judgment roll has been extended and courts of the 15th Circuit agreed to continue to assist MEC with testing and providing feedback for any additional requirements to ensure a complete online judgment roll in MEC.

Court	Date went live
Simpson Circuit, civil & criminal	1/28/19
Yazoo Circuit and County Court, civil & criminal	2/25/19
Wilkinson Chancery Court	3/11/19
Greene Chancery Court completed MEC district-wide for 16 th Chancery	4/1/19
Jefferson Davis Chancery Court completed MEC district-wide for 13 th Chancery	4/22/19
Humphreys Chancery Court	5/14/19
Jefferson Chancery Court	6/17/19
Jefferson Circuit Court	6/17/19
Jackson Circuit & County Courts, criminal, completed 19 th Circuit Court civil & criminal filing	7/1/19
Jasper Chancery Court	7/22/19
Newton Chancery Court	9/16/19
Scott Chancery Court completed MEC district-wide for 2 nd Chancery	10/7/19
Adams Chancery Court completed MEC district-wide for 17 th Chancery	10/14/19
Claiborne Circuit Court	10/28/19
Lamar Circuit & County Courts, criminal completed MEC district-wide for 15 th Circuit Court civil & criminal filing	11/4/19
Attala Circuit Court	11/21/19

During 2019, two major system releases were deployed that contained many updates and enhancements to MEC which benefited all users of the system. These releases are required periodically as the needs of the courts change, new laws are enacted, and pilot requirements are completed. Additional system releases will be scheduled during 2020 as new requirements are identified and added to MEC.

A major data migration project was the import of Hinds Circuit Court criminal court case data spanning 1990-2013 and Hinds County Court case data spanning 1994-2015. Hinds Circuit Court began docketing criminal cases in MEC Jan. 1, 2014, and began docketing County Court cases in MEC Jan. 1, 2016. The legacy data import to MEC included 33,246 Hinds Circuit Court cases and 33,700 Hinds County Court cases. This consolidated all electronic court data from Hinds Circuit and County courts into MEC, and allowed Hinds County to discontinue using a legacy court case management system.

The first MEC data interface with a state agency, the Mississippi Department of Health, was completed in 2019. Beginning in 2020, the Vital Statistics Division of the Department of Health will receive nightly updates of divorce data from MEC and import the data directly into a statistical system. This eliminates double data entry and no longer requires the 67 chancery courts using the MEC system to print and mail paper forms containing this data to Vital Statistics.

The MEC system is funded solely through collection of civil filing fees, user fees to access documents, and renewal fees. MEC has a total of 7,483 registered attorney users and 6,538 non-attorney users. Since its inception, MEC has generated usage fees totaling \$2,256,767.80, which includes \$1,228,783.20 from Chancery Courts and \$1,027,984.60 from Circuit Courts. The online page viewing fees are divided equally between the county clerks of the court and MEC.

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 including but not limited to the appellate court case management system CITS/ACADIA, the appellate court e-filing system, the statewide Youth Court case management system MY-CIDS, the AOC statistical system SCATS, the Board of Bar Admissions online bar exam application system BarWeb; and the design and maintenance of the State of Mississippi Judiciary website.

The first release of ACADIA, Appellate Case and Docket Information App, was put into production in 2019. This first version implemented initial case and motion entry for the Supreme Court Clerk's Office. Over time, the ACADIA unified case

management system will replace all of the various applications in the CITS system for the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. In 2020, IT plans to finish replacing most of what the Clerk's Office uses in CITS with improved functions in ACADIA.

The BarWeb online bar exam application system was expanded to accept additional application types. All application types for the bar exam may now be submitted online. Also, the internal system upgrade for Bar Admissions staff was completed.

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 at no charge to local courts.

Legislative mandate and the *In re Olivia Y.* lawsuit require extensive and continuous training. Training must continue year round to keep up with the high turnover rate of social workers. MYCIDS staff provided 40 training events in 2019. Onsite training sessions totaling 1,523 hours were conducted in 75 counties. The MYCIDS team also gave presentations at five conferences.

Court Interpreter Credentialing Program

The Administrative Office of Courts provides all state courts with a list of language interpreters who have demonstrated proficiency in oral and written interpretation of court proceedings.

Twenty-two credentialed language interpreters were available to assist trial courts across the state at the end of 2019. They included 20 Spanish speakers, one Mandarin Chinese speaker, and one who speaks Portuguese. There is a need for Vietnamese speakers, but none have been credentialed yet. Interpreters live in Bay St. Louis, Biloxi, Clinton, French Camp, Gulfport, Hazlehurst, Meridian, Newton, Ocean Springs, Oxford, Tupelo and Vicksburg as well as Cordova, Goodlettsville, Memphis and Nashville, Tenn., and New Orleans.

Court interpreters must understand court proceedings and be fluent in English and a second language. The Administrative Office of Courts during 2019 conducted two seminars in Jackson to introduce bilingual speakers to the requirements for court interpreting. Seminars introduced interpreting in legal settings including the courtroom, depositions and other legal proceedings. Attendance at a seminar is the first step in the program which will train, certify, and test individuals who wish to serve as court interpreters. There are two levels of proficiency: registered and certified. Nine interpreters are certified, and 13 are registered.

AOC adopted Standards for Court Interpreters and a Code of Ethics for Court Interpreters on Oct. 17, 2011. 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.





Access to Justice Commission

The Mississippi Supreme Court created the Access to Justice Commission on June 28, 2006, to develop a unified strategy to improve access to the civil courts for the poor. The Commission is tasked with investigating the need for civil legal services to the poor in Mississippi, and evaluating, developing and recommending policies, programs and initiatives that will assist the judiciary in meeting needs for civil legal services to the poor. The Commission is made up of 21 voting members and 15 ex-officio members. Co-Chairs are Chancery Judge Jacqueline Mask of Tupelo and former Mississippi Bar President Rodger Wilder of Gulfport. Nicole McLaughlin of Tupelo is executive director.

One of the Commission's primary objectives is to expand and improve the state's civil legal services delivery system. The Commission, the Volunteer Lawyers Project, Chancery Courts, local bar associations and private attorneys completed the second year of statewide pro se clinics in 2019, providing free legal services to approximately 1,077 people in legal clinics in every chancery district in the state. Free clinics dealt with family law issues such as guardianships to enroll children in school, uncontested divorce, child custody and support, child visitation, domestic violence protection orders, adoptions, legal name change, emancipation and estate matters. Some also assisted with expungements, opening the way for people to seek better employment opportunities.

The American Bar Association in July 2019 presented the Mississippi Bar with the 2019 Harrison Tweed Award in recognition of efforts to improve civil legal services to people living in poverty. In 2018, free family law clinics were held in every judicial district in the state. More than 450 Mississippi lawyers provided more than 1,300 hours of free legal services to 850 people in need. Legal clinic events were organized and supported by the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission, chancellors and their staffs, the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project, Legal Services offices, local bar associations and volunteer lawyers.

In addition to the statewide legal clinics, the Commission during 2019 hosted nine clinics in Tupelo in conjunction with the Family First Initiative, an arm of the Commission on Children's Justice. Volunteer attorneys assisted 34 clients during evening clinics, providing legal assistance to families in efforts to prevent removal of children to foster care.

The Mississippi Department of Human Services, the Commission and the University of Mississippi School of Law partnered to produce a series of self-help videos. Planning and script writing began in 2019, and filming is expected to be done in 2020. The videos are intended to assist individuals represented by counsel and self-represented litigants to prepare for court and navigate the legal system. Topics include how to file a case in the clerk's office; courtroom etiquette; how to offer testimony at trial (including how to prepare for cross-examination); how to subpoena a witness (including questioning a witness and the hearsay rule); how to set a case for hearing; how to serve process; and how to be a good witness (including direct and cross-examination). The videos will be accessible on the Commission's website and available as a link on other provider and partner websites.

The Commission corrected and updated its online interactive forms for irreconcilable differences divorce, emancipation

and adult name change. These and other forms are available on the Access to Justice Commission’s website at <http://www.msatjc.org/legal-forms>. The Commission also began construction of an updated www.expungemississippi.com website.

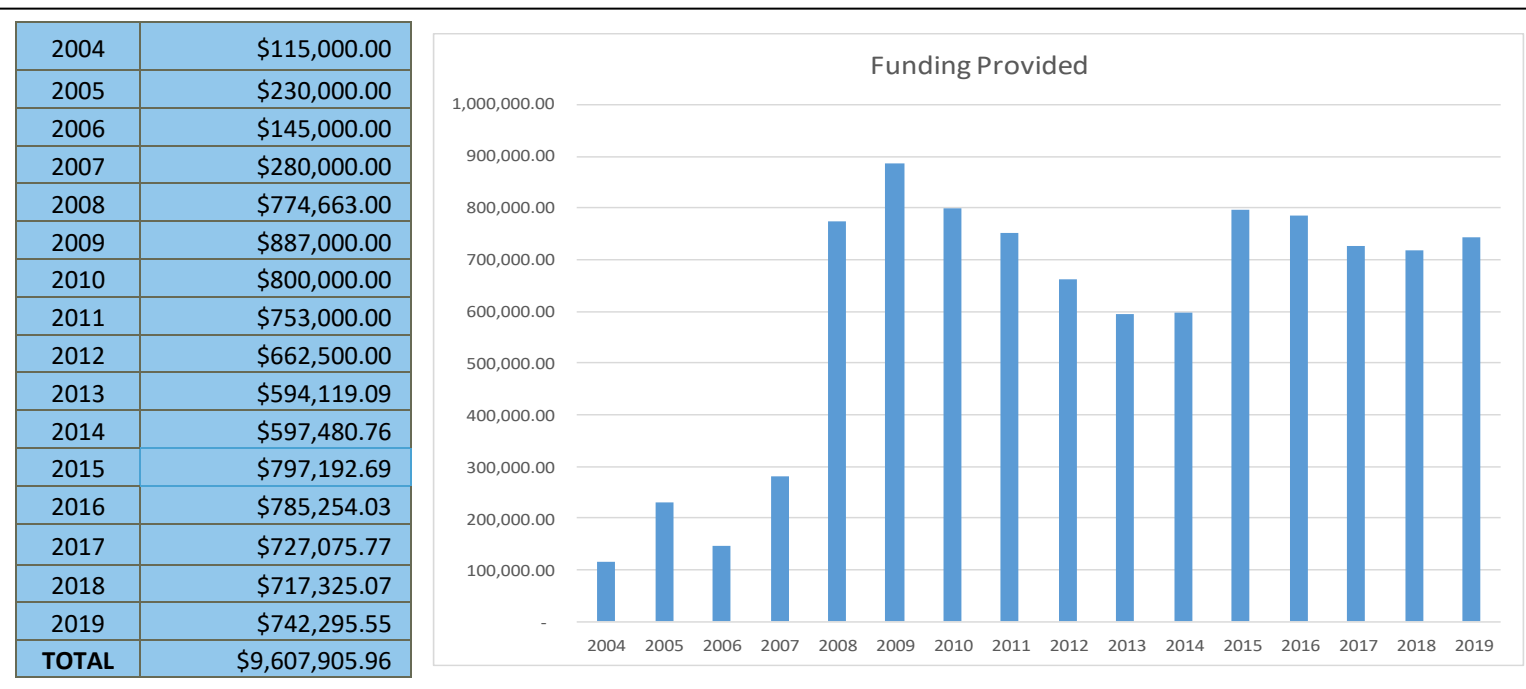
Civil Legal Assistance Fund

The Supreme Court in Fiscal Year 2019 distributed \$742,295.55 for civil legal assistance to low income people — \$24,970 more than the previous year. The funds are provided to the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project, North Mississippi Rural Legal Services and the Mississippi Center for Legal Services. Funds are disbursed quarterly. Civil Legal Assistance Fund distributions are paid from special assessments on court filings and from fees charged to out-of-state attorneys appearing *pro hac vice*.

The Supreme Court added the Access to Justice Commission to those entities receiving funding on May 10, 2018. The Court directed the Mississippi Bar to retain one-third of *pro hac vice* fees to be used by the Access to Justice Commission, and to forward two-thirds to the Administrative Office of Courts for the Civil Legal Assistance Fund. The two Legal Services entities collectively receive one-third, and MVLP receives one-third. The Supreme Court increased the *pro hac vice* fee from \$200 to \$300 so that the funding to the Commission would not affect the amount directed to Legal Services and MVLP.

Since the Civil Legal Assistance Fund was created in 2004, more than \$9.6 million has been disbursed to help poor people to gain access to the legal system.

The Civil Legal Assistance Fund provides much needed assistance to promote access to the courts for low income people. Mississippi has an estimated 695,000 people living at or below poverty level. There aren’t enough Legal Services lawyers to handle the estimated 200,000 to 250,000 people who need legal aid each year but can’t afford it. MVLP takes some of the cases referred by Legal Services. Legal Services offices are funded primarily by federal appropriations to the Legal Services Corporation. Money provided through the Civil Legal Assistance Fund is a significant supplement to Legal Services providers.



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. Co-chairs are Supreme Court Justice Dawn Beam, 10th District Chancellor Rhea Shelton and Rankin County Youth Court Judge Thomas Broome.

The Commission’s efforts have grown to include numerous programs. They include:



Family First Initiative

Mississippi officials in July 2018 launched the Family First Initiative of the Commission on Children's Justice in an effort to prevent child abuse and neglect and prevent children from entering the foster care system. The Initiative aims to work with families so that children may remain in their homes. The initiative sought to address multiple needs of struggling families by directing those families to services and resources that will improve family stability and create safer home environments for children. The idea is to identify and coordinate resources and to connect struggling families with services.

Justice Dawn Beam and First Lady Deborah Bryant served as co-chairs of the Family First Initiative. Judges and other leaders of the Family First Initiative organized six pilot programs in Bolivar, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lee and Pearl River counties and the Metro Jackson area of Hinds, Madison and Rankin counties. Local steering committees were formed in each of the pilot areas.

The pilot communities began evaluating and addressing local capacity for prevention through identified priorities for change and action plans including strategies, activities and projects that could be coordinated and implemented at the local level with the backing of the State Steering Committee.

Helping people find jobs was the focus in Bolivar County, where retired television broadcaster Pam Chatman spearheaded organization of job fairs with employers and expungement clinics so that Delta residents could qualify for better jobs. FedEx of Memphis hired local people and provided buses to transport workers. Representative from Toyota's Blue Springs plant held a job fair in Cleveland in August 2019, and FedEx Ground of Olive Branch conducted interviews for jobs as package handlers in Cleveland in September 2019.

The Hinds County Committee reviewed the Census and Child Protection Services geo-data and determined that additional input is necessary before deciding on priorities for change. Members would like as much residential involvement as possible and started hosting meetings in local libraries and schools to generate community buy-in.

Jackson County Court and Youth Court Judge Sharon Sigalas worked on a holistic program for incarcerated parents of foster children and a program to help prepare older foster care wards for living on their own when they age out of the foster care system. Jackson County committee members determined that a major problem was awareness, and identified organizations and resources. The committee held a series of community family-focused resource fairs that helped residents learn about available services and let resource and service providers learn community needs and network with other services.



Lauderdale County Initiative members recognized awareness, mentorship and academic preparedness as major challenges for children and families. A Resource Committee compiled and updated a directory of services available to the public. A Mentor Program Committee worked toward programs for children and adults. Two committees addressed academic challenges in third grade reading and high school graduation.

The Family First Initiative partnered with the Access to Justice Commission in Lee County to provide free

legal services to families at risk of state intervention. On one night a month, volunteer attorneys offered their services to *pro se* clients in Tupelo. The Lee County committee worked with the Haven Acres neighborhood to implement reading clubs, summer learning programs and quarterly neighborhood events to generate resource awareness and connect needs with resources.

The Madison County Steering Committee identified priorities for change as poverty, crime, education and drug abuse. Canton was identified as having communities in highest need and the Advisory Committee made suggestions for future projects that could contribute to positive change around each of the four priorities.

Pearl River County hired a Jansen Owen as Youth Court County Resource Coordinator to connect needy families to resources. Interventions range from repairs of homes to donated dental work, all of which allowed children to remain with their parents.

Rankin County tested a collaboration platform, Meet the Need. This free, online tool connects needs to resources and helps coordinate efforts around at-risk families. Rankin County identified two locations to educate residents of existing services and survey them for needed services.

Indigent Parent Representation

A Parent Representation Committee grew out of the work of the Commission on Children’s Justice in 2012. The Parent Representation Task Force is a collaborative effort between the judiciary, Child Protection Services, Casey Family Programs, the Kellogg Foundation, the University of Mississippi School of Law, the Mississippi College School of Law, the American Bar Association, the Mississippi Center for Legal Services and the Mississippi Judicial College. Members of the Committee continue to seek public and private funding to maintain and expand programs that provide attorneys for indigent parents facing allegations of abuse and neglect in Youth Court.

At the end of 2019, approximately 26 counties had formal parent representation programs for indigent parents in Youth Court. About eight more counties indicated that parent representation was provided to indigent parents facing termination of parental rights. The focus in 2019 with Casey Family Programs was expansion of parent representation into new counties and expanding services by adding a social worker to the parent representation team. Casey provided \$45,000 for expansion of parent representation and a social worker in Jackson County; \$16,500 for deepening services in Rankin County with the hiring of a social worker; \$75,000 for a Resource Counsel through Mississippi College School of Law’s Mission First Legal Aid; \$37,000 to fund the Jurist in Residence; \$33,500 for deepening services in Forrest County, expanding the services from the 0-3 age group to parents of children of all ages; and \$25,000 to expand to Pearl River County. Casey funds were reallocated to provide expansion into Lamar County and Marion County at \$9,000 per county. The Jackson County Board of Supervisors voted to fund parent representation fully following the first year funding from Casey Family Programs. Remainder funds were reallocated to reimburse Forrest, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lowndes, Warren and Yazoo counties for parent representation expenditures in 2019.

COUNTY	Year Parent Rep Began
Adams	2012
Alcorn	2019
Bolivar	2017
DeSoto	2016
Forrest	2012
Hancock	2015
Harrison	2013
Hinds	2017
Itawamba	2019
Jackson	2018
Lafayette	2016
Lamar	2019
Lauderdale	2019
Lee	2019
Lowndes	2019
Madison	early 1980s
Marion	2019
Monroe	2019
Perry	2019
Pontotoc	2019
Rankin	2012
Pearl River	2018
Tishomingo	2019
Union	2019
Warren	2019
Yazoo	2019



The Mississippi Legislature increased the appropriation for parent representation to \$278,500 for state Fiscal Year 2020, July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020. This allowed expansion of parent representation to Itawamba, Monroe, Pontotoc, Tishomingo, Union, Alcorn and Lee counties. All counties obtained matching funds from their respective counties.

In April 2019, a new collaboration was formed between Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama to address similar challenges across all three states. An agreement was reached to share information, resources for combined trainings for parent attorneys and to develop border agreements for placement of children with relatives.

The number of children in foster care declined significantly in most counties which provide parent representation. The foremost benefit is to families and children. Also, there is a significant fiscal benefit to the state in avoided expenses of foster care. Benefits include:

- Parents are better informed of their rights and responsibilities to engage the system to accomplish reunification in a timely manner under federal mandates;
- Parent attorneys assist in finding services and treatment programs to meet the needs of the parents, which hastens the permanency process;
- Child Protection Services staff are held accountable and the quality of their work improved across the pilot sites;
- Alternative plans such as relative care or adoption are pursued more quickly due to more timely representation identifying those parents who are unwilling or unable to engage the systems to accomplish reunification;
- Children spend less time in foster care;
- Children experience fewer moves and placements, thereby reducing trauma; and
- Critical reunification or other permanency for foster children is accomplished more quickly.



Commission on Guardianship and Conservatorship

The Supreme Court on April 13, 2017, created the Mississippi Commission on Guardianship and Conservatorship to develop recommendations to improve the way the courts protect children, vulnerable adults and estates. Justice Dawn Beam and Mississippi Judicial College Executive Director Randy Pierce served as co-chairs of the 26-member Commission.

The 2019 Legislature passed the Mississippi Guardianship and Conservatorship Act, which revised guardianship and conservatorship laws. The new laws are also referred to as the GAP Act, for “guard and protect.” Senate Bill 2828, introduced by Sen. Joey Fillingane, was based on recommendations the Commission on Guardianship and Conservatorship made after nearly two years of intensive study. Gov. Phil Bryant signed the legislation on April 16, 2019, then included the GAP Act in a ceremonial bill signing on May 29. The new laws were to go into effect Jan. 1, 2020. Mississippi’s laws governing guardianships and conservatorships had not been substantially changed in more than 30 years.

The GAP Act aims to improve court processes for protecting children and vulnerable adults and their assets. The Commission made recommendations to create a clear and workable statutory framework, modern and enforceable reporting requirements, comprehensive court monitoring procedures, state driven accountability measures, protection of the ward’s fundamental rights, and transparency from all parties.

The GAP Act goes beyond accounting for money and possessions. The law places the well-being of the person on the same footing as their assets, ensuring daily needs such as food, housing and medical care are met for vulnerable children and adults. The law also allows judges to tailor guardianship and conservatorship orders to the needs of the person, allowing vulnerable adults to maintain some independence. Judges have options for respecting the dignity of the person by recognizing there are varying degrees of disabilities. This allows the court to tailor the restrictions on the ward's rights, providing protections where needed while allowing the ward to maintain independence when possible. Recognizing that some disabilities are temporary, the GAP Act sets out a process for ending legal restrictions when the ward recovers from an impairment.

Mississippi Electronic Courts, MEC, provides chancellors, court staff and clerks of court with a mechanism for monitoring and tracking guardianships and conservatorships. At the end of December 2019, 67 of the 82 Chancery Courts utilized MEC.

Guardian ad Litem Study Group

The Mississippi Judicial College convened a Guardian Ad Litem Study Group for the first time in January 2017. The Study Group worked to improve guardian ad litem training programs and resources. Upon the recommendations of the Study Group, the Mississippi Judicial College wrote a manual for use by practicing guardians ad litem, law school clinics, and certification programs. The Study Group concluded its work in September 2019 with the publication of the *Manual for Guardians Ad Litem in Child Protection and Termination of Parental Rights Proceedings*. The manual sets out best practices for protecting the best interests of the child in achieving a desirable permanency outcome. Topics include reasonable efforts at reunification, compliance with federal laws impacting funding, evidentiary considerations, and the threshold criteria for recommending parental representation. The manual may be accessed on the website of the Mississippi Judicial College at <https://mjc.olemiss.edu/publications/>. The Mississippi Judicial College will update the manual each year. New topics will be added. The next addition is expected to be a chapter on the Indian Child Welfare Act.

William Charlton, Research Counsel for the Mississippi Judicial College, drafted the manual with the assistance of Study Group members including Dr. Scott Benton, Medical Director of the Children's Justice Center and Chief of the Division of Forensic Medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center; David Calder, Director of the Child Advocacy Clinic at the University of Mississippi School of Law; S. Lynn Etheridge, Assistant Professor, School of Education and Psychology at Alcorn State University; Ta'Shia Gordon, Special Assistant Attorney General; Carlyn Hicks, Director of Mission First Legal Aid Office and Clinical Adjunct Professor at Mississippi College School of Law; Judge John Hudson, Jurist in Residence; Shirley Kennedy, Director of the Child Advocacy Clinic at the Mississippi College School of Law; Tracey Malone, Senior Associate at SLI Government Solutions/Center for the Support of Families and former Deputy Commissioner of Child Welfare at the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services; Patti Marshall, retired Special Assistant Attorney General; Tonya Rogillio, Director of Field Support Programs at Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services; Seth Shannon, Special Assistant Attorney General; Kris Simpson, Adjunct Professor for the Child Advocacy Clinic at University of Mississippi School of Law; Patricia Smith, attorney and practicing guardian ad litem; Karla Tye, Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi; Marlin Stewart, attorney and practicing guardian ad litem; Heather Wagner, Director of the Office Against Interpersonal Violence at the Mississippi State Department of Health; Joyce Williams, Special Assistant Attorney General; and Kelly Williams, attorney and Certified Child Welfare Law Specialist by the National Association of Counsel for Children.

Jurist in Residence

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 issues such as child abuse reporting, termination of parental rights, general child protection services issues of competency in court proceedings, indigent parent representation, truancy/education neglect and crossover youth.

The Jurist in Residence worked with the Commission on Children's Justice and its co-chairs, Justice Dawn Beam, Chancellor Rhea Shelton and Youth Court Judge Thomas Broome, to address pressing issues in child welfare.

The Jurist in Residence served on task forces in local communities, addressing issues which relate to the fair, effective, and efficient administration of courts. The Jurist in Residence worked closely with several courts to develop protocols and procedures to address issues relating to those courts. The Jurist in Residence continued as a resource to local Youth Court judges and systems on emerging issues which affect those local jurisdictions, including but not limited to child abuse reporting, termination of parental rights, general Child Protection Services issues of competency in court pro-



ceedings, Title IV-E compliance, indigent parental representation, truancy/education neglect and crossover youth. The Jurist in Residence fielded numerous individual calls from judges, prosecutors and others on those issues. The Jurist in Residence served on several boards and committees including the Indigent Parental Representation Committee, Kids Count, Children Advocacy Centers of Mississippi and the Methodist Children's Home.

The Jurist in Residence continued to work with the Parent Representation Task Force to expand sites into northern and southern pilots and worked with the Legislature to develop funding for these programs. The Jurist In Residence worked closely with judges from new prospective pilot sites to establish and expand programs in 2020.

The Jurist in Residence worked closely with other agency heads and representatives in furthering the goals and objectives of the Family First Initiative to develop a holistic approach to meet needs and provide hope for challenged families. The Initiative worked to identify and develop local resources that will address the needs of children and their families.

The Jurist in Residence worked with Justice Beam and others from the Commission on Children's Justice to develop statewide multi-disciplinary training for judges and court staff, Child Protection Services case workers, prosecutors, defenders, guardians ad litem and others. More than 700 people received training which dealt with weighing meaningful safety with risk in removal decisions in abuse and neglect cases and in the science of trauma caused by removal. The Jurist in Residence also worked with judges in parent representation sites to encourage participation in multi-disciplinary training conducted by the Office of the State Public Defender in those sites.

The Jurist in Residence maintained regular telephonic and personal conferences with Commissioner of Child Protection Services, Jess H. Dickinson, to address emerging concerns. Some issues included cross-discipline training, mandatory reporting throughout the systems statewide, issues with court providing proper language to allow the state to draw down matching funds, and a variety of local issues. Several other initiatives grew out of those conversations.

The Jurist in Residence worked with Justice Beam, Rex Mohon, Jamie McBride, Tom Broome and Mary Fuller to further develop the MYCIDS system to prompt judges to include language which complies with Title IV-E. The revisions prompt and require local courts to make and include within their orders timely findings regarding removal if a child's continued presence in his/her home was contrary to their welfare. Work continued to ensure that Youth Court orders would include timely findings of Reasonable Efforts to prevent removal and later, Reasonable Efforts to complete the plan. The MYCIDS system was amended to require local courts to make those findings before they could complete court orders. The Jurist in Residence worked to identify those courts failing to meet those requirements and intervened to assist those courts in developing procedures which ensure compliance in the future.

Before compliance efforts began, Mississippi had a reimbursement rate from the federal government of 29 percent of all expenditures for foster care. This percentage is known as the penetration rate. As a result of efforts and initiatives, the penetration rate has significantly increased to 40 percent, which has resulted in millions of dollars of federal reimbursement, and savings to the state.

The Jurist in Residence worked with the Legislature on all Children's Commission priorities. The work included participation in several legislative committee meetings, small group meetings with chairs of key committees and meeting with general members to educate them on the needs of Youth Court and Youth Court practice. The Jurist in Residence educated committees and individual legislators on fictive care, the guardianship assistance program and durable legal guardianship. The Jurist in Residence also met with senators and representative while the Legislature was not in session, educating on the needs of Youth Courts and Youth Court jurisdiction for the 2020 session. The Jurist in Residence created position papers on the Parent Representation movement and presented at the annual Three Branch Convening with the Legislature. Significant legislation was passed, primarily updating the Youth Court Act to more efficiently address the needs of children, particularly those who come within the jurisdiction of the judicial systems for abuse and neglect. Other significant legislation included the GAP Act and amendment to the power of attorney statute to provide protection of children who are made subject to one of the POAs.

The Jurist in Residence served as an instructor training in both state and national settings. He was a faculty member in the Southeast regional training on meaningful reasonable efforts findings. He presented in Casey Family Programs seminars on the Jurist in Residence program in Mississippi. He is an adjunct member of the Casey Family Program's National Judicial Engagement Team. In that role, he works with other members of the team to develop scientific based practices to improve judicial engagement in child welfare systems across the nation.

The Jurist in Residence trained new referees and guardians ad litem on reasonable efforts and contrary to the welfare requirements.. He also presented at a conference on at-risk kids and the need for a culture change from Zero Tolerance. He also presented at the Mississippi Youth Court Conference. The Jurist in Residence presented to several entities on the Statewide Risk Assessment Instruments to prevent unnecessary detentions. He also attended the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges conference, National Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, the National Court Improvement Conference, Indian Child Welfare Conference, One Loud Voice Conference and state trial court conferences.

The Jurist in Residence continued work with the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) State Advisory Group to develop and roll out a statewide risk assessment instrument (RAI) for youth and children charged with criminal offenses to determine the necessity of placement in a detention setting based on safety assessments. Many crossover youth who are a part of the Child Protection System are at high risk of possibility of detention. This seeks to ensure that only those who pose a safety risk are placed in detention for the right reasons. The Jurist in Residence continued work with pilot counties to assist in the

maintenance and replication of JDAI initiatives.

The Jurist in Residence worked with Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi 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. Due to those efforts, the Legislature passed a bill making those interviews and DVD's Youth Court records.

The Jurist in Residence fielded numerous media requests regarding the Youth Court system and child welfare.

Reentry Council

The Reentry Council works to create effective strategies to assist former inmates in their return to society, reduce recidivism, 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 as MS Code Ann. 47-7-101. U.S. District Judge Keith Starrett, senior status, is chairman of the Reentry Council. Presiding Justice James W. Kitchens is the Supreme Court's representative on the Council.



THE APPELLATE COURTS OF MISSISSIPPI

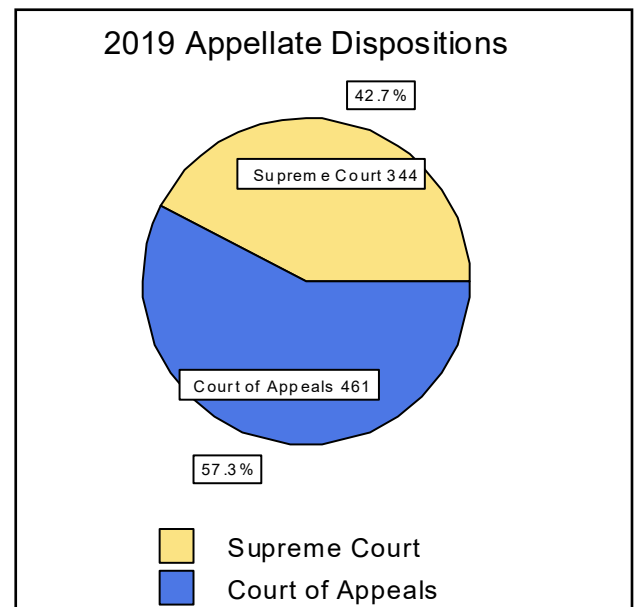
The Mississippi Supreme Court

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:

- (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 2019, the Supreme Court disposed of 344 cases. Of those, 145 cases were decided on the merits. The remaining cases were dismissed. Of the 124 *appeals* decided on the merits, 89 (71.8 percent) were civil, and 35 (28.2 percent) were criminal. Of the 89 civil appeals decided on the merits, 52 (58.4 percent) were affirmed, and 37 (41.6 percent) were reversed or vacated. Of

the 35 criminal appeals decided on the merits, 31 (88.6 percent) were affirmed, and 4 (11.4 percent) were reversed.

The Supreme Court disposed of a total of 3,368 motions and petitions during 2019. This included 42 motions for rehearing, all of which were denied. Pursuant to Rule 5 of the Mississippi Rules of Appellate Procedure, the Court disposed of 149 petitions for interlocutory appeal. Of those, 105 (70.5 percent) were denied, 29 (19.5 percent) were granted, and 15 (10.1 percent) were dismissed or had other dispositions.

In 2019, the Supreme Court disposed of 148 petitions for writ of certiorari. Of those, 14 (9.5 percent) were granted; 120 (81.8 percent) were denied; and 14 (9.5 percent) were dismissed or had other dispositions.

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments in 22 cases in 2019.

Appellate Case Filings	2016	2017	2018	2019
Notices of Appeal, General	863	732	770	637
Death Penalty Direct Appeal	0	1	0	1
Death Penalty PCR Applications	7	2	6	2
Bar Discipline Cases	4	1	9	8
Bar Discipline Appeals	1	4	0	1
Bar Reinstatement Cases	2	4	4	1
Judicial Performance Cases	4	0	3	2
Annexation Cases	0	1	1	2
Election Contests	6	1	2	1
Interlocutory Appeals Granted	44	37	22	29
Certiorari Petitions Granted	27	40	12	14
Workers' Compensation Appeals	24	27	25	17
Utility Rate Cases	1	0	0	0
Federally Certified Questions	0	1	1	1
Total New Cases Filed	983	824	830	697

2017—2018 — 2019 Case Dispositions									
	Supreme Court			Court of Appeals			Courts Combined		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Dismissed by Clerk's Rule 2 Notice	62	50	63	21	21	25	83	71	88
Dismissed by Order of Court	170	144	133	18	22	23	188	166	156
Cert Petitions Dismissed after Grant	7	3	1	NA	NA	NA	7	3	1
Decided by Published Opinion	171	160	142	478	410	413	649	570	655
Per Curiam Affirmed	7	2	1	NA	1	0	7	3	1
Decided by Order	24	6	4	4	0	0	28	6	4
Total Case Dispositions	441	365	344	521	454	461	962	819	805

2017—2018 — 2019 Dispositions of Rehearing Motions, Interlocutory Appeals and Cert Petitions									
	Supreme Court			Court of Appeals			Courts Combined		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Motions for Rehearing	53	63	42	228	208	177	281	271	219
Petitions for Interlocutory Appeal	163	170	149	0	0	0	163	170	149
Petitions for Certiorari	171	173	148	0	0	0	171	173	148



Court of Appeals of the State of Mississippi

The Court of Appeals handled 57.3 percent of the appeals decided in 2019 — 461 cases. 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.

Of the 461 cases decided in 2019, 413 were decided on the merits. The remaining cases were dismissed. Of those decided on the merits, 282 were civil and 120 were criminal. Of the 282 civil cases decided, 214 (75.9 percent) were affirmed and 68 (24.1 percent) were reversed. Of the 120 criminal appeals decided, 102 (85.0 percent) were affirmed and 18 (15.0 percent) were reversed.

The Court of Appeals disposed of a total of 1,671 motions and petitions during 2019. This included 177 motions for rehearing, of which 176 (99.4 percent) were denied or dismissed, and 1 (0.6 percent) was granted.

The Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in 52 cases in 2019. The Court heard nine of those cases on college campuses as part of its Court on the Road program. Since 2005, the Court of Appeals has heard a few cases each year on college campuses and at other locations to educate students and the public about the workings of appellate courts.

Average days final brief to decision				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Supreme Court	200	192	200	174
Court of Appeals	228	213	211	211

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 174 days during 2019, and the Court of Appeals’ average time was 211 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 83 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



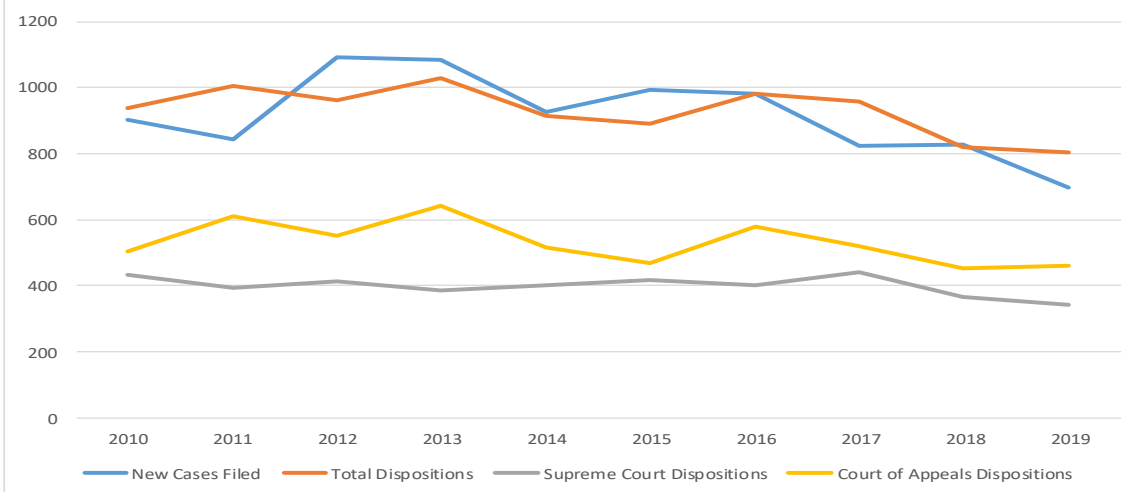
The Office of the Clerk is maintained within the framework of various statutes enacted by the Legislature, and rules, regulations and orders promulgated by the Mississippi Supreme Court. The office consists of a total of 12 full-time members, with Jeremy Whitmire serving as the Clerk of Court beginning July 1, 2018. The office itself serves both the Mississippi Supreme Court and the Mississippi Court of Appeals. It is tasked with providing numerous administrative and other court-related services which encompass essential and critical functions in organizing, promoting, managing and maintaining the effective operations of the state's appellate judiciary.

In addition to serving as the point of contact for attorneys, litigants, and the general public with respect to all case-related matters, the clerk's office serves as the primary repository for appellate cases and other matters that are before each court. The office works persistently in conjunction with not only various departments within the Mississippi Supreme Court, but also with the state's trial courts to ensure the coordination of court processes and resources to provide the most efficient and effective means for the flow and management of a large volume of appellate matters.

The operating efficiency of the clerk's office has greatly increased with the advent of electronic filing and the continued expansion of that service throughout the state. The Mississippi Supreme Court's case-management system, combined with the appellate e-filing system, works in accord with the e-filing system of the Mississippi Electronic Courts. This combined effort has greatly increased access to the court not only for the judges and attorneys of our state but also to the general public.

In 2019, the Court opened a total of 697 new cases. The clerk's office processed 600 appellate records, 4,749 motions, 709 responses, and addressed a total of 2,287 procedural motions. In addition, there were a total of 1,421 electronic briefs processed, not including those conventionally filed, a total of 2,971 orders, and 769 mandates. At present the clerk's office is accountable for a total of around 1,200 open case files.

Appellate Filings and Dispositions
2010-2019



Appellate Filings and Dispositions, 2010 — 2019

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
New Cases Filed	904	844	1,091	1,084	926	995	983	824	830	697
Total Dispositions	938	1,006	964	1,030	916	890	980	958	819	805
Supreme Court Dispositions	433	396	412	386	400	419	401	441	365	344
Court of Appeals Dispositions	505	610	552	644	516	471	579	521	454	461



MISSISSIPPI TRIAL COURTS OF RECORD

The Mississippi Judiciary in 2019 experienced a turnover of 44 judgeships, what is believed to be the largest turnover ever on the bench in the state. Most of the turnover occurred in the trial courts. In 2018, 35 chancellors, circuit judges and county court judges did not seek re-election, and four were defeated in November 2018 elections. Forty-two new judges took office in January 2019, including 20 new chancellors, nine new circuit judges, and 10 new county court judges. The election of three new Court of Appeals judges in November 2018 brought the turnover to 42. In February 2019, the turnover grew to 44, with Court of Appeals Chief Judge Kenny Griffis joining the Supreme Court, and new Judge Cory T. Wilson joining the Court of Appeals.

Judicial Conference leadership



The Conference of Circuit Judges elected leaders on April 25, 2019, during the Spring Trial and Appellate Judges Conference in Biloxi. Circuit Judge Lisa P. Dodson of Gulfport was elected chair. Judge Dodson has served as a Circuit Judge of the Second Circuit District since January 2007. Circuit Judge Kelly Luther of Ripley was elected vice-chair. He has served as a Third District Circuit Judge since January 2015. Circuit Judge Tony Mozingo of Oak Grove was re-elected secretary-treasurer. He has served as a Circuit Judge



of the Fifteenth Circuit Court since January 2011.

The Conference of County Court Judges in April 2019 re-elected Madison County Court Judge Ed Hannan as chairman, Washington County Court Judge Vernita King Johnson as vice-chair, and Lauderdale County Court Judge Veldore Young Graham as secretary of the Conference. Judge Hannan, of Madison, has served as chairman of the Conference of County Court Judges since 2015. Judge Johnson has been vice-chair since October 2004. Judge Young Graham began her service as Conference secretary in April 2012.

Judge since January 2007. Judge Johnson, of Greenville, has served as Washington County Court Judge since January 1999. Judge Young Graham, of Meridian, has served on the Lauderdale County Court bench since January 2007.



The Conference of Chancery Court Judges elected officers on Oct. 24, 2019, during the Fall Trial and Appellate Judges Conference in Jackson. Chancellor Haydn Roberts of Brandon was elected chair of the Conference, Chancellor Rhea Sheldon of Purvis was elected vice-chair, and Chancellor Larry Little of Oxford was elected secretary-treasurer. Judge Roberts became a Judge of the Rankin County Chancery Court in January 2016. Chancellor Sheldon was appointed to the 10th Chancery Court bench in February 2016. Chancellor Little became a judge of the 18th Chancery Court in January 2019.

Rankin County and Youth Court Judge Thomas Broome is chair of the Council of Youth Court Judges, a position which he has held since September 2011. Judge Broome has served as Youth Court Judge of Rankin County since January 2003. Tishomingo County Youth Court Referee Joey Cobb has served as vice-chair since September 2011. Lauderdale County Youth Court Judge Veldore Young Graham has served as secretary-treasurer since September 2017.



The Conference of Senior Status Judges in April 2019 elected Senior Status Judge James Bell as chairman of the conference. Senior status judges elected retired Circuit Judge William Gowan as vice-chair, and retired Chancery Judge Patricia Wise as secretary-treasurer. Judge Bell served as a Hinds County Court Judge 1983-1989. Judge Gowan was a Hinds Circuit Court Judge 2011-2018. Judge Wise served as a Hinds Chancery Judge 1989-2018.

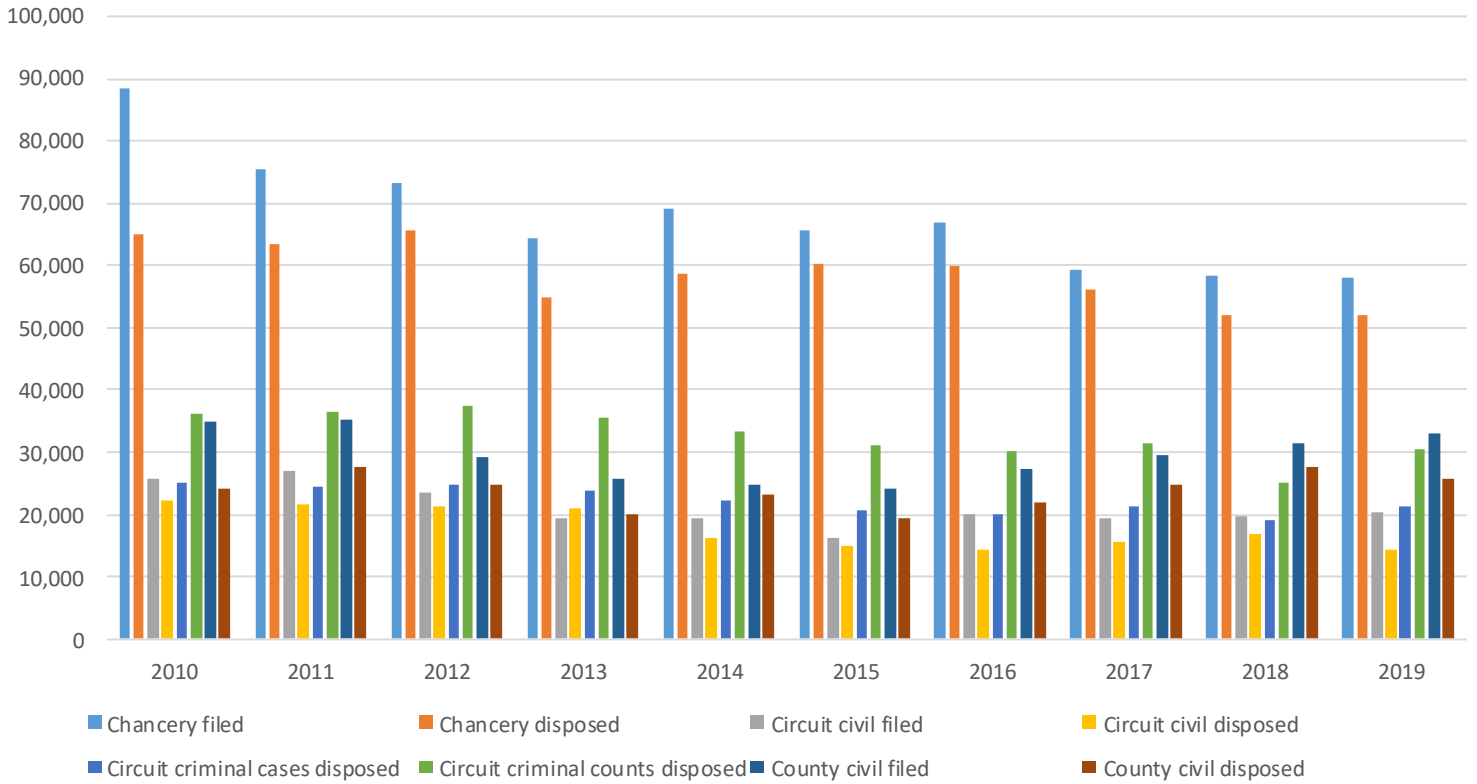
Senior Status judges serve a critical function, hearing cases by appointment of the Supreme Court when all the judges in a district recuse themselves or when otherwise required by statute. The Supreme Court made 593 special judge ap-

pointments in 2019, including appointing Senior Status judges to 573 of those cases. The remaining cases were assigned to sitting judges in nearby districts.

In December 2019, the ranks of Senior Status judges totaled 69 retired judges. Many of the judges who did not seek reelection in 2018 signed up to work as Senior Status judges during 2019, accepting cases by appointment of the Supreme Court.

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 listed here is by **fiscal year**.

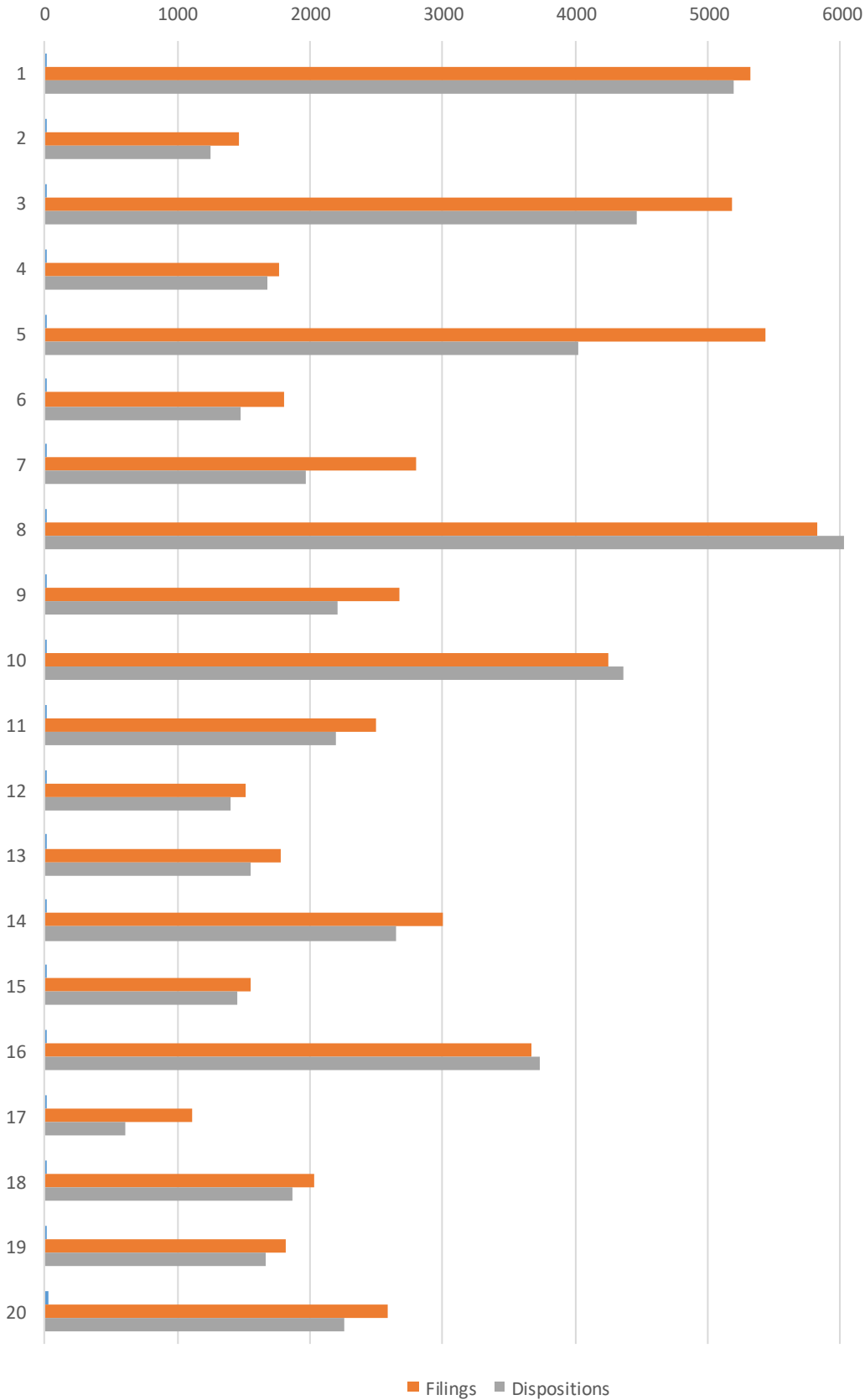
TRIAL COURT FILINGS AND DISPOSITIONS FY 2010-2019



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Chancery filed	88,424	75,558	73,268	64,515	69,100	65,589	66,999	59,221	58,346	58,099
Chancery disposed	64,994	63,349	65,782	54,817	58,573	60,192	59,780	56,079	52,132	52,042
Circuit civil filed	25,800	26,862	23,553	19,429	19,305	16,236	19,907	19,328	19,789	20,235
Circuit civil disposed	22,249	21,687	21,441	21,003	16,123	14,874	14,467	15,557	16,974	14,288
Circuit criminal cases disposed	25,258	24,371	24,917	23,851	22,229	20,703	20,188	21,182	19,000	21,171
Circuit criminal counts disposed	36,131	36,561	37,366	35,437	33,322	31,174	30,284	31,361	25,009	30,644
County civil filed	34,950	35,254	29,177	25,761	24,793	24,055	27,366	29,417	31,307	32,915
County civil disposed	24,032	27,606	24,930	20,038	23,187	19,552	21,861	24,933	27,602	25,665

CHANCERY COURTS

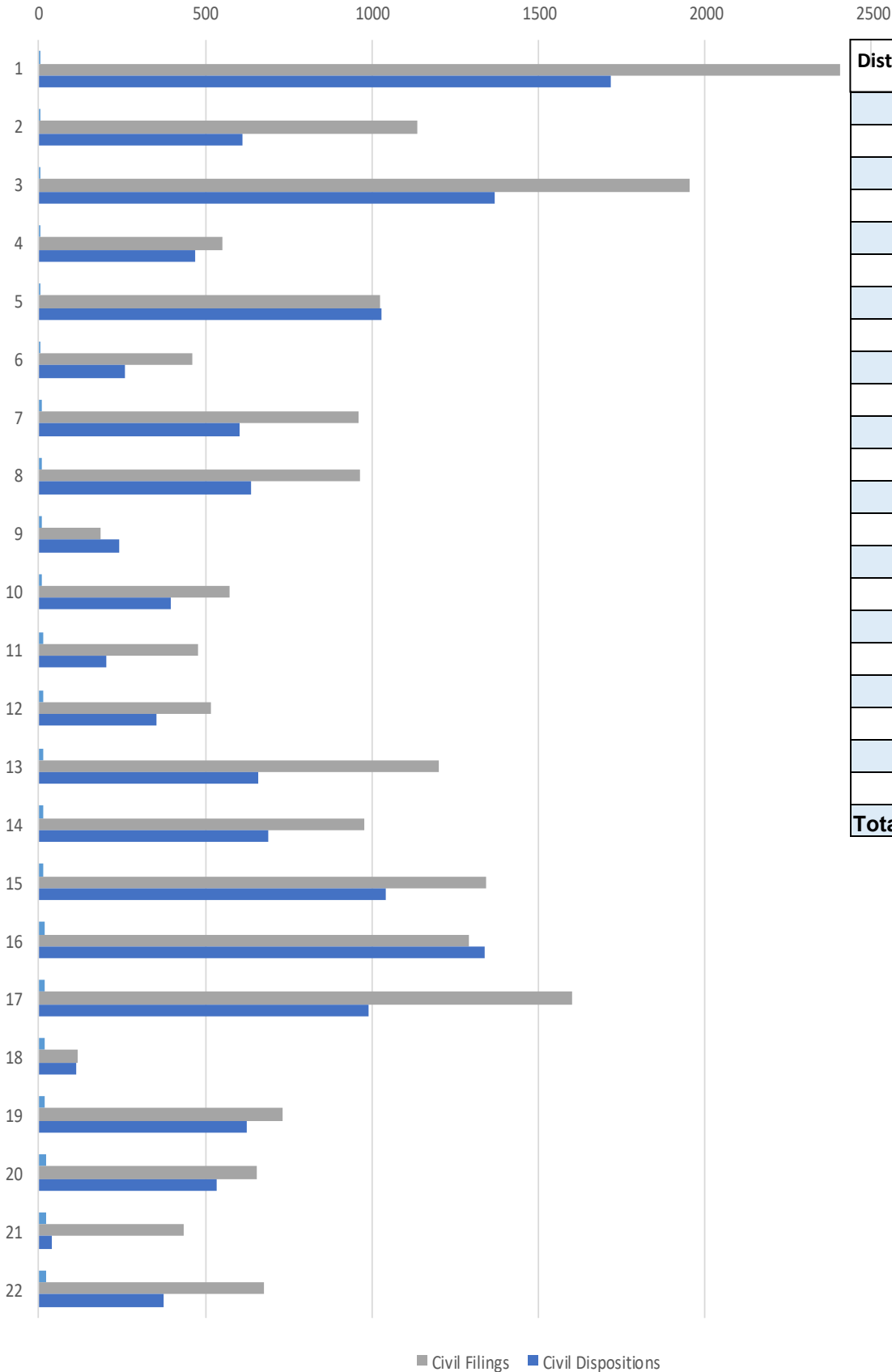
Chancery Court Cases Filed and Disposed FY 2019



District	Filings	Dispositions
1	5,322	5,197
2	1,464	1,250
3	5,189	4,468
4	1,772	1,678
5	5,434	4,026
6	1,803	1,479
7	2,803	1,962
8	5,830	6,035
9	2,672	2,203
10	4,250	4,360
11	2,494	2,194
12	1,518	1,404
13	1,776	1,553
14	3,006	2,653
15	1,553	1,457
16	3,676	3,737
17	1,106	601
18	2,026	1,868
19	1,821	1,662
20	2,584	2,255
Total	58,099	52,042

CIRCUIT COURTS

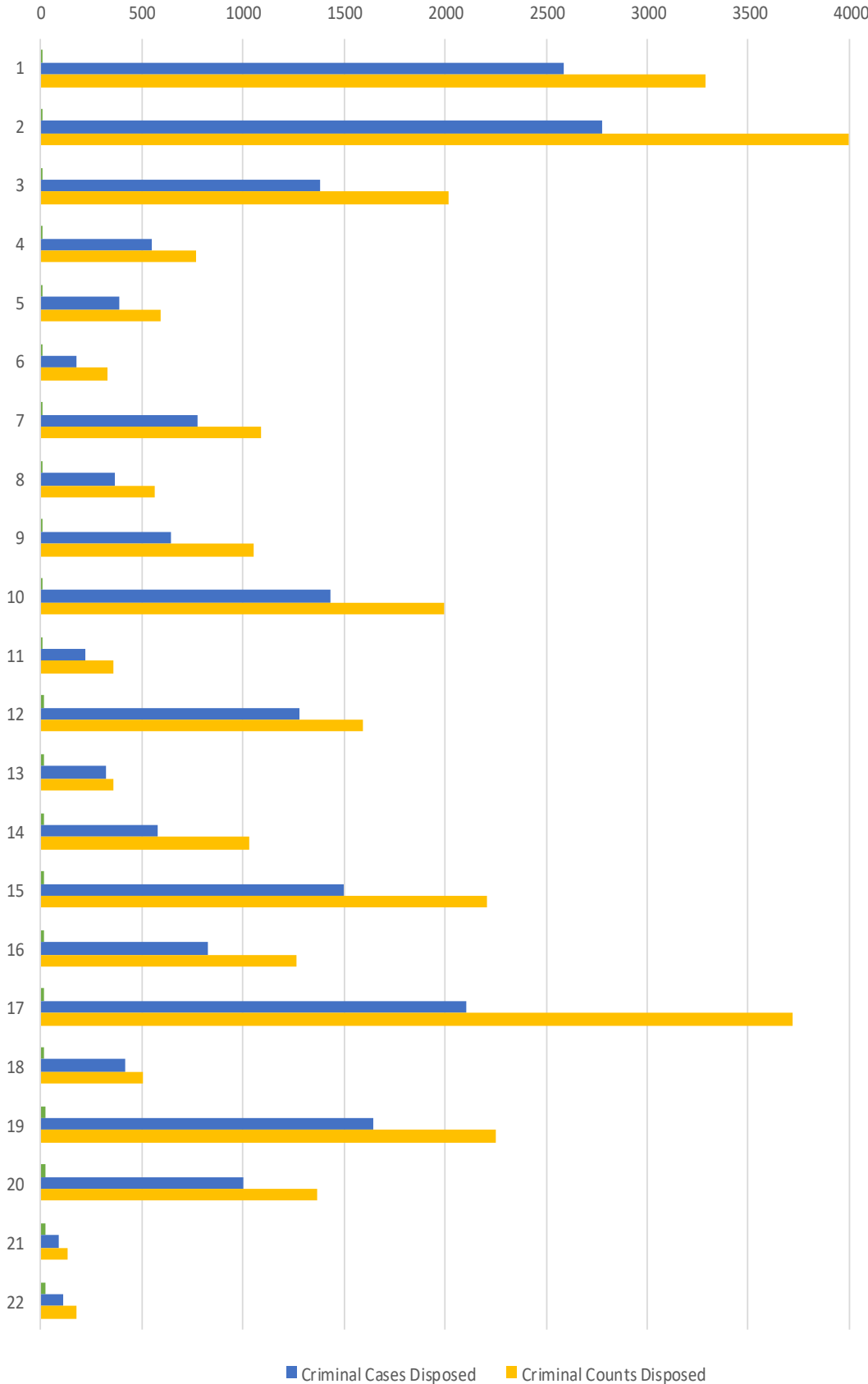
Circuit Civil Cases Filed/ Disposed FY 2019



District	Filings	Dispositions
1	2,407	1,717
2	1,138	611
3	1,953	1,367
4	550	471
5	1,023	1,028
6	459	259
7	961	604
8	965	636
9	186	240
10	572	398
11	476	203
12	517	353
13	1,202	659
14	976	689
15	1,344	1,042
16	1,291	1,338
17	1,602	988
18	116	114
19	733	624
20	654	535
21	434	37
22	676	375
Total	20,235	14,288

CIRCUIT COURTS

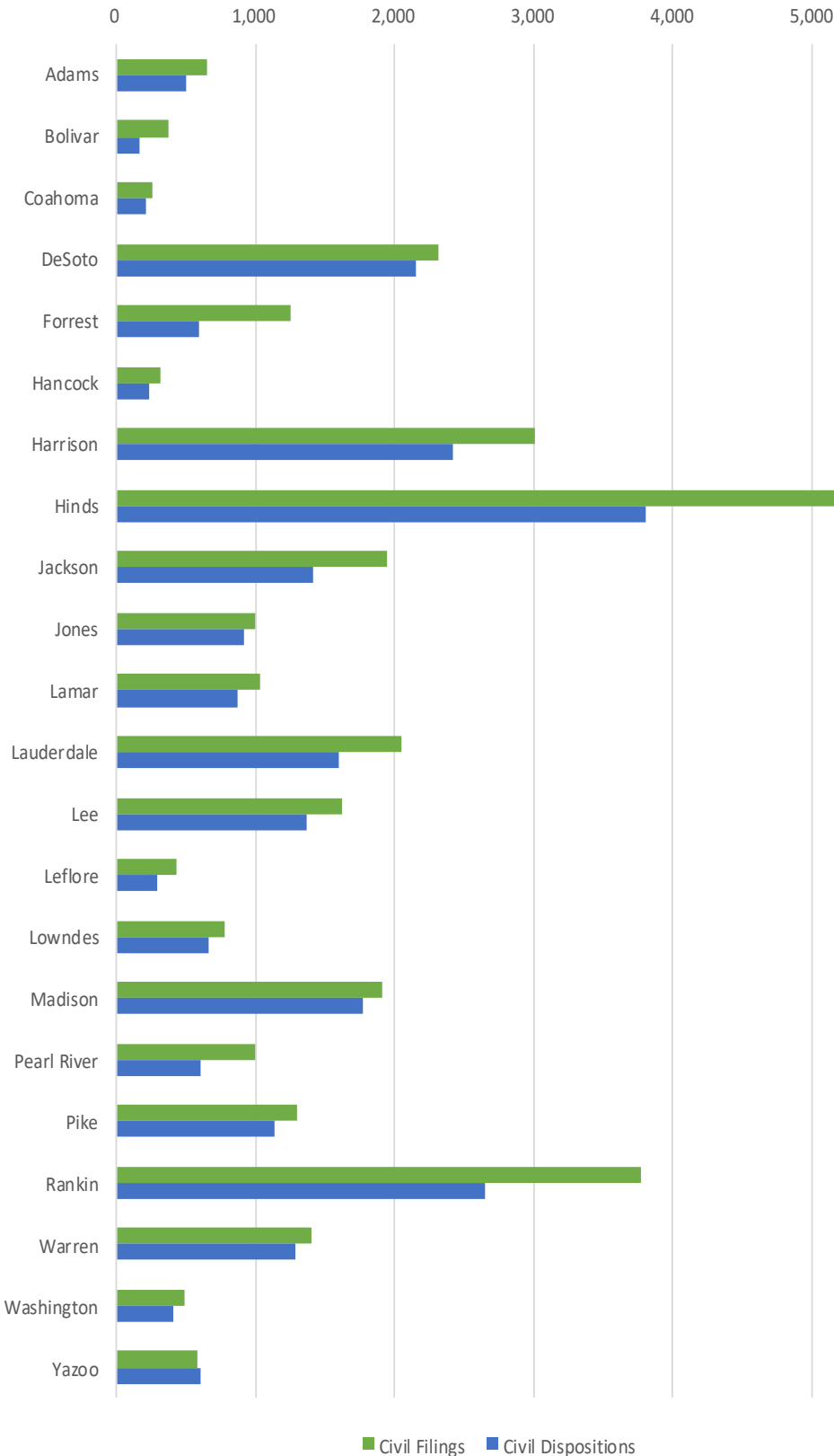
Circuit Criminal Cases/Counts Disposed FY 2019



District	Cases disposed	Counts disposed
1	2,587	3,289
2	2,777	3,997
3	1,380	2,018
4	546	767
5	388	592
6	178	326
7	775	1,092
8	367	560
9	645	1,056
10	1,435	1,993
11	221	358
12	1,279	1,596
13	321	360
14	575	1,027
15	1,499	2,205
16	828	1,266
17	2,105	3,717
18	418	503
19	1,648	2,250
20	999	1,364
21	90	131
22	110	177
Total	21,171	30,644

COUNTY COURTS

County Court Civil Cases Filed/Disposed FY 2019



County	Civil Filings	Dispositions
Adams	654	504
Bolivar	373	170
Coahoma	257	208
DeSoto	2,312	2,154
Forrest	1,255	589
Hancock	322	231
Harrison	3,008	2,416
Hinds	5,417	3,805
Jackson	1,944	1,411
Jones	1,001	914
Lamar	1,032	869
Lauderdale	2,046	1,595
Lee	1,622	1,368
Leflore	437	296
Lowndes	779	664
Madison	1,912	1,776
Pearl River	1,003	603
Pike	1,294	1,140
Rankin	3,767	2,646
Warren	1,407	1,293
Washington	493	412
Yazoo	580	601
Total	32,915	25,665

YOUTH COURTS, CALENDAR YEAR 2019

	Total Referrals			Formal Adjudicated Referrals			Referrals Handled Informally		
	Abuse	Neglected	Delinquent	Abuse	Neglected	Delinquent	Abuse	Neglected	Delinquent
ADAMS	37	189	266	6	55	211	31	134	55
ALCORN	164	395	147	6	37	75	158	358	72
AMITE	32	96	30	2	17	17	30	79	13
ATTALA	25	50	59	9	25	30	16	25	29
BENTON	0	20	25	0	18	23	0	2	2
BOLIVAR	34	99	249	4	27	129	30	72	120
CALHOUN	94	147	19	1	4	9	93	143	10
CARROLL	12	9	20	0	6	11	12	3	9
CHICKASAW	42	78	61	2	10	60	40	68	1
CHOCTAW	4	7	6	3	6	6	1	1	0
CLAIBORNE	14	41	35	3	16	30	11	25	5
CLARKE	154	47	30	0	6	22	154	41	8
CLAY	82	159	112	7	26	101	75	133	11
COAHOMA	53	163	169	8	27	107	45	136	62
COPIAH	35	244	170	13	68	130	22	176	40
COVINGTON	13	73	114	9	30	83	4	43	31
DESOTO	1315	1980	1961	47	101	1134	1268	1879	827
FORREST	79	335	387	13	82	186	66	253	201
FRANKLIN	14	90	35	3	21	27	11	69	8
GEORGE	47	136	34	16	44	18	31	92	16
GREENE	2	37	9	2	33	8	0	4	1
GRENADA	92	230	192	23	59	133	69	171	59
HANCOCK	428	962	261	10	110	178	418	852	83
HARRISON	1983	4095	1324	27	167	736	1956	3928	588
HINDS	397	606	905	354	498	745	43	108	160
HOLMES	106	83	138	3	9	135	103	74	3
HUMPHREYS	12	18	56	12	18	50	0	0	6
ISSAQUENA	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
ITAWAMBA	83	315	74	3	27	53	80	288	21
JACKSON	46	279	576	16	186	234	30	93	342
JASPER	23	80	47	2	5	41	21	75	6
JEFFERSON	4	16	47	1	9	30	3	7	17
JEFFERSON DAVIS	25	77	13	1	17	13	24	60	0
JONES	894	1787	718	35	236	599	859	1551	119
KEMPER	9	32	0	0	4	0	9	28	0
LAFAYETTE	4	32	170	4	32	129	0	0	41
LAMAR	217	445	358	3	53	200	214	392	158
LAUDERDALE	47	191	706	8	147	404	39	44	302
LAWRENCE	28	69	53	11	47	52	17	22	1
LEAKE	1	8	31	1	7	20	0	1	11
LEE	323	1128	755	4	125	395	319	1003	360

	Total Referrals			Formal Adjudicated Referrals			Referrals Handled Informally		
	Abuse	Neglect	Delinquent	Abuse	Neglect	Delinquent	Abuse	Neglect	Delinquent
LEFLORE	278	445	207	7	42	142	271	403	65
LINCOLN	66	155	121	1	23	86	65	132	35
LOWNDES	45	108	252	8	58	147	37	50	105
MADISON	118	233	342	12	42	318	106	191	24
MARION	66	461	112	28	73	88	38	388	24
MARSHALL	62	251	199	13	81	169	49	170	30
MONROE	116	238	130	8	37	94	108	201	36
MONTGOMERY	4	27	39	2	5	21	2	22	18
NESHOBA	131	348	134	1	13	120	130	335	14
NEWTON	4	12	129	0	10	102	4	2	27
NOXUBEE	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
OKTIBBEHA	7	57	116	7	57	99	0	0	17
PANOLA	17	472	183	0	14	120	17	458	63
PEARL RIVER	204	276	179	17	50	98	187	226	81
PERRY	25	87	29	2	29	23	23	58	6
PIKE	189	707	465	28	168	237	161	539	228
PONTOTOC	179	294	111	5	79	106	174	215	5
PRENTISS	29	94	115	1	48	91	28	46	24
QUITMAN	1	4	19	1	4	17	0	0	2
RANKIN	786	1409	1066	22	337	432	764	1072	634
SCOTT	21	95	221	3	46	139	18	49	82
SHARKEY	1	1	29	1	1	29	0	0	0
SIMPSON	18	127	136	6	74	128	12	53	8
SMITH	1	25	76	1	25	72	0	0	4
STONE	37	181	32	4	68	25	33	113	7
SUNFLOWER	48	188	188	22	66	137	26	122	51
TALLAHATCHIE	42	53	66	0	5	59	42	48	7
TATE	10	52	202	10	51	146	0	1	56
TIPPAH	60	231	68	13	62	61	47	169	7
TISHOMINGO	100	315	65	2	31	44	98	284	21
TUNICA	61	101	188	19	30	113	42	71	75
UNION	20	61	61	3	32	50	17	29	11
WALTHALL	47	172	108	6	51	48	41	121	60
WARREN	139	172	356	96	99	354	43	73	2
WASHINGTON	105	472	602	24	132	280	81	340	322
WAYNE	3	2	66	3	2	30	0	0	36
WEBSTER	44	157	10	9	15	10	35	142	0
WILKINSON	2	33	67	1	32	43	1	1	24
WINSTON	8	97	31	2	13	28	6	84	3
YALOBUSHA	39	113	51	1	14	38	38	99	13
YAZOO	108	229	206	17	30	109	91	199	97

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. Kevin Lackey, J.D., is Director of AOC.

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;
- 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, 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/ CIP MULTIDISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

The Court Improvement Program (CIP) Workgroup was established in 2007 as a collaborative effort between the Administrative Office of Courts (AOC) and the Department of Human Services-Division of Family and Children’s Services. That cooperation continues with the Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS). Problem-solving groups that have grown out of the CIP Workgroup include the Parent Representation Task Force, Jurist in Residence meetings with the MDCPS Commissioner, the 2019 Judicial Engagement Teams, Three Branch Government Convening, and the Family First Initiative to train and implement the Family First Prevention Services Act. Members of the CIP Workgroup were participants in the Mississippi Commission on Children’s Justice.

A CIP Multidisciplinary Committee was appointed to develop and implement the CIP Strategic Plan in 2018, when CIP came under the Mississippi Commission on Children’s Justice. Members of the Committee in 2019 included MDCPS state and regional staff, Jurist in Residence, County Youth Court judges, the Attorney General’s office, Mississippi College School of Law Mission First Legal Aid Office, AOC staff, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Children’s Advocacy Centers of Mississippi (CAC), and MDHS state office staff from the Division of Child Support.

Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

Throughout 2019, Supreme Court Justice Dawn Beam, Youth Court judges, CIP Director Mary Fuller and Jurist in Residence John N. Hudson participated in development and revisions of the Court Collaboration section of the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services’ Program Improvement Plan with Children’s Bureau Region IV representatives. The Court Collaboration part of MDCPS’ Program Improvement Plan are:

- to expand the roll out of the Practice Model to Chancery District 1, which includes Alcorn, Itawamba, Lee, Monroe, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tishomingo and Union counties, and to complement the roll out of parent representation in those same counties. Current Practice Model sites are in Forrest, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Jones, Lauderdale and Stone counties in south Mississippi. The expansion would include Alcorn, Itawamba, Lee, Monroe, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tishomingo and Union counties in north Mississippi.
- to continue the collaboration of the “With Teamwork Our Kids Win” multidisciplinary trainings in north, central and south Mississippi; and for the Court CIP Director to summarize the Action Plans from the May 2019 trainings and request an update from the counties on progress toward the goals. MDCPS and AOC CIP will determine a smaller number of counties making progress to develop data on the outcomes.

- to develop training for guardians ad litem according to the Guardian Ad Litem Manual completed by the Mississippi Judicial College in September 2019.
- to continue to develop resources and access to resources through MDCPS' My Resources computer program, the Navigator Program for primary prevention in the community and the Court's Family First Initiative to develop community services and support to stabilize families.
- to add Hinds County in the second year of the MDCPS PIP.

The Program Improvement Plan was approved by the Children's Bureau and included action steps for the judiciary as well as the agency.

CIP training events in 2019 included:

- Judicial Engagement Team training sponsored by Casey Family Programs. Teams of child protection professionals who work to safeguard the welfare of abused and neglected children gathered for a day of training in Oxford, Madison and Gulfport on May 13, 14, and 15, 2019. Judges led teams of court and agency staff.
- Three Branch Government Convening sponsored by the Kellogg Foundation;
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) training for judges;
- One LOUD Voice, a multi-disciplinary approach to child abuse sponsored by Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi;
- National Interdisciplinary Parent Defense Conference for judges and parent attorneys;
- Annual CIP Grantees' Meeting and Five Year Planning Conference;
- Annual Youth Court Judges and Referees Conference.
- 2019 Indian Child Welfare Act Conference: The Ninth Annual Indian Child Welfare Act Conference was held Aug. 13, 2019, at the Silver Star Convention Center at Choctaw. Approximately 250 Tribal leaders, attorneys, judges, social workers and other professionals who deal with Native American children in a Youth Court setting attended the ICWA conference. The conference, hosted annually by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, began nine years ago as an effort to educate state judges and social workers on the requirements of ICWA.

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 Mississippi Commission on CLE is to ensure that each member of the 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 the state of Mississippi. Newly admitted attorneys are required to attend a specific new lawyer program within the first two years of practice, then comply with the annual requirement thereafter.

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 2019, the Mississippi Commission on CLE approved for credit 545 live programs that were held in the state of Mississippi, 2,539 live programs held outside the state of Mississippi and 4,918 programs that were given by satellite, teleconference or online through live webcasts and on-demand programs.

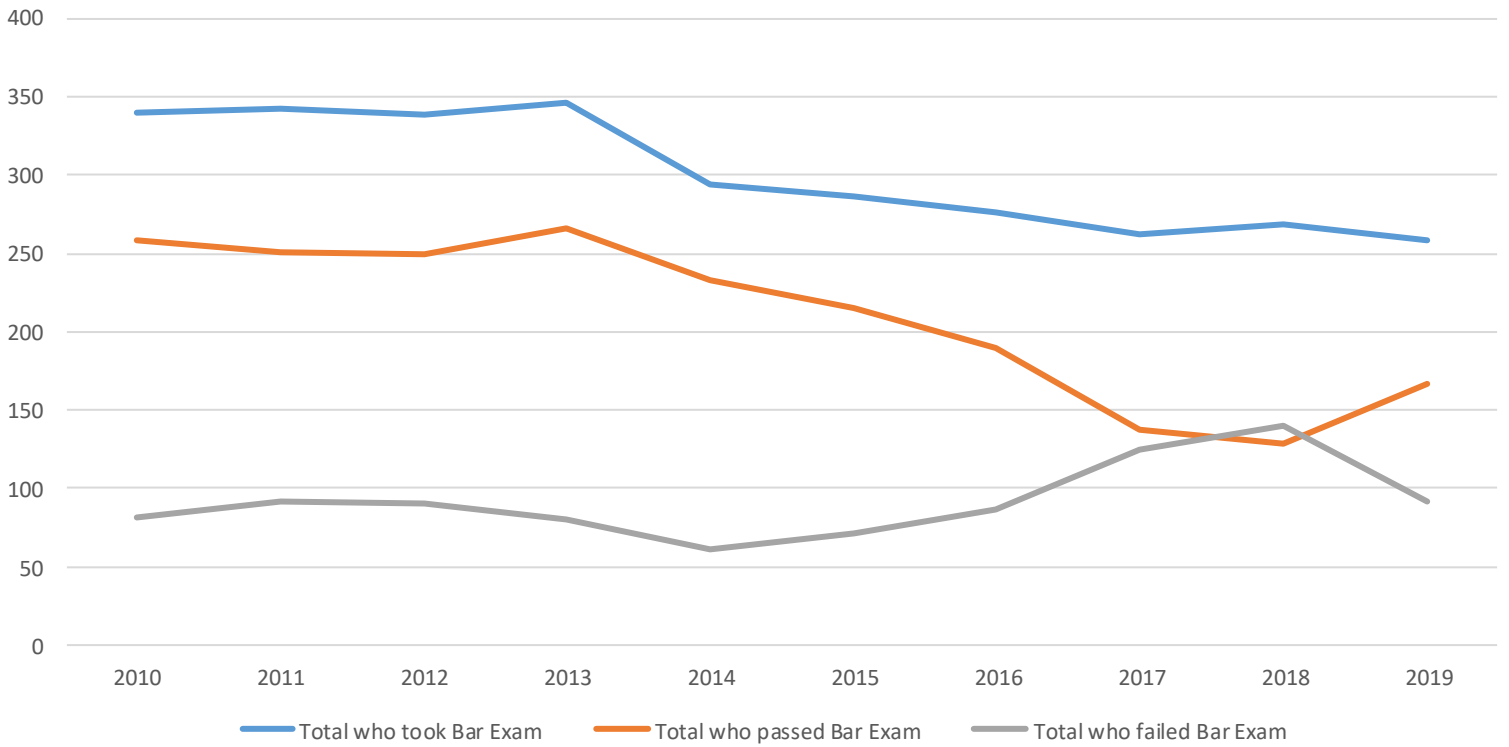
BOARD OF BAR ADMISSIONS

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.

In 2019, the Board processed 10 applications for registration as law students, and 279 applications for examination. There were 57 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 256 people took the Bar Exam in 2019. The pass rate was 64.7 percent, a significant improvement over the 48 percent pass rate for 2018.

Bar Exam Pass Rate 2010 - 2019



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total took Bar Exam	340	343	339	346	294	286	276	262	269	258
Total passed Bar Exam	259	251	249	266	233	215	190	137	129	167
Total failed Bar Exam	81	92	90	80	61	71	86	125	140	91
Percentage pass rate	76%	73%	73%	76%	79%	75.00%	68.00%	52.00%	48.00%	64.70%

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Bar Exam Applications										
Applications for registration as law student	104	105	69	66	92	61	27	29	16	10
Applications for examination	413	420	426	433	385	318	343	343	323	279
Admission on motion					46	30	46	33	56	57
Total applications processed/being processed	517	525	495	499	523	409	416	405	395	346

Bar Exams										
Took February bar exam	87	101	108	108	111	98	95	88	91	102
Passed February bar exam		66	71	76	90	70	62	36	37	62
Failed February bar exam		35	37	32	21	28	33	52	54	40
Took July bar exam	253	242	231	238	183	188	181	174	178	156
Passed July bar exam		185	178	190	143	145	128	101	92	105
Failed July bar exam		57	53	48	40	43	53	73	86	51
Total who took bar exam	340	343	339	346	294	286	276	262	269	258
Total who passed bar exam	259	251	249	266	233	215	190	137	129	167
Total who failed bar exam	81	92	90	80	61	71	86	125	140	91