



# Annual Report 2012

20th Judicial Circuit and  
Ottawa County Probate Courts  
Ottawa County, Michigan

[www.miottawa.org/Courts](http://www.miottawa.org/Courts)

# The 20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts 2012 Annual Report

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## *Measuring Success...*

During 2010 and 2011, the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts embarked on an endeavor to re-think and reengineer how the Courts do business. By taking time to reflect and implement a plan of action for adapting to a “new normal,” the Courts set the stage to quantify those efforts by improving Court policy, organizational structure and processes in 2012.

Measuring success is a collaborative effort, drawing upon the expertise of local Court staff, the Michigan State Court Administrative Office and the National Center for State Courts. Through several workshops the Courts were able to identify perceived strengths and targets of opportunity for court operations and service delivery. While the Courts celebrated many successes, such workshops presented a unique opportunity to formalize a measurement process that establishes a baseline for the continuous improvement of court practices.

A public dashboard, highlighting performance measures deemed most important to the Ottawa County community, was one outcome of this process. Such a dashboard allows the Courts to not only remain accountable for their actions and regularly gauge the public’s perception, but also, challenge the courts to elevate to a higher level of performance. The results of these efforts to measure success are reflective of the Courts’ ability to achieve its mission - “To administer justice and restore wholeness in a manner that inspires public trust.”



**EDWARD R. POST**  
CHIEF CIRCUIT JUDGE – TRIAL DIVISION

**JON HULSING**  
CIRCUIT JUDGE – TRIAL DIVISION

**JON A. VAN ALLSBURG**  
CIRCUIT JUDGE – FAMILY DIVISION

**KENT D. ENGLE**  
CIRCUIT JUDGE – FAMILY DIVISION

**MARK A. FEYEN**  
CHIEF PROBATE JUDGE – FAMILY DIVISION

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**



**TWENTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT  
OTTAWA COUNTY**

**KEVIN J. BOWLING, JD**  
CIRCUIT COURT ADMINISTRATOR

March 23, 2013

Ottawa County Board of Commissioners  
12220 Fillmore Street  
West Olive, MI 49460

Dear Commissioners:

It is a pleasure to present to you the 2012 Annual Report for the 20<sup>th</sup> Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts. This document offers an in-depth account of the Courts' many achievements during the last year, which were only made possible through the cooperative and collaborative efforts with the Ottawa County elected officials, County administration and departments, and community stakeholders.

Measuring success means taking a "balanced scorecard" approach to developing a set of performance measures that are most salient for internal court management and external stakeholders. Historically, the Courts have monitored performance through the active implementation of the strategic planning process. In 2012, emerging State mandates, requiring all Michigan trial courts to demonstrate performance, served as a catalyst for the 20<sup>th</sup> Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts to reflect on the success of the Courts and formalize the performance demonstration process. A deliberate approach involving staff, representatives of the Michigan State Court Administrative Office and a team from the National Center for State Courts culminated in a plan to develop a public dashboard. The public dashboard will be posted on the [miottawa.org](http://miottawa.org) website and provide an at-a-glance view of the Courts' performance. By establishing baseline indicators of effectiveness, efficiency, satisfaction and productivity, this dashboard will not only satisfy State level requirements, but also, it will provide a unique opportunity to increase the accessibility to and transparency of the Courts.

While the public dashboard will provide a "snapshot" of the Courts' performance, it is an honor to share with you these numerous accomplishments, which set the stage for the Courts to continue the journey to be a truly high performing court and learning organization.

Sincerely,

*Edward R. Post*

*Mark A. Feyen*

Hon. Edward R. Post  
Chief Judge, 20<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court

Hon. Mark A. Feyen  
Chief Judge, Ottawa County Probate Court

# 20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Court Judges

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*“Justice does not depend upon legal dialectics so much as upon the atmosphere of the court room, and that in the end depends primarily upon the judge.”*

*Judge Learned Hand*

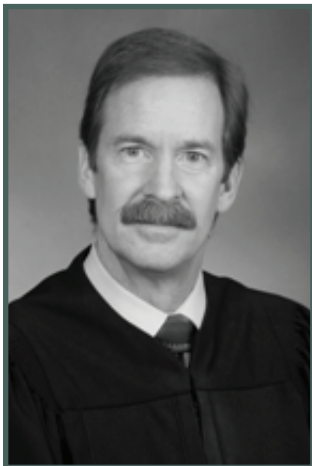
The Circuit and Probate courts in Ottawa County are fortunate to have a learned and collegial group of elected judges. The 20th Circuit Court has four judges presiding over the courtrooms, handling a variety of criminal, civil, family, juvenile and appellate cases. The Probate Court has one judge who handles all probate cases and assists the Circuit Court with Family Division cases, as well as the Adult and Juvenile Drug Courts. The Hon. Edward R. Post and the Hon. Mark A. Feyen have been appointed by the Michigan Supreme Court to serve as Chief Judge of the Circuit Court and Probate Court, respectively. The Hon. Jon A. Van Allsburg serves as Chief Judge Pro Tempore of the Circuit Court.



Hon. Edward R. Post  
Chief Judge, Circuit



Hon. Mark A. Feyen  
Chief Judge, Probate



Hon. Jon A. Van Allsburg  
Circuit Judge



Hon. Jon H. Hulsing  
Circuit Judge



Hon. Kent D. Engle  
Circuit Judge

# Court Administration

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Kevin J. Bowling, JD, MSJA  
Court Administrator

In August 1969, soon after he became chief justice of the United States, Warren E. Burger observed, “The courts of this country need management, which busy overworked judges, with drastically increased caseloads, cannot give. We need a corps of trained administrators or managers to manage and direct the machinery so that judges can concentrate on their primary duty of judging. Such managers do not now exist, except for a handful who are almost entirely confined to state court systems. We must literally create a corps of court administrators or managers and do it at once.” As a result of Chief Justice Burger’s efforts and those of other leaders in the field, court administrators have become an important part of the federal, state and local levels. (The Court Administrator: A Guide and Manual, National Association for Court Management, 2011).

It should be emphasized that all judges, particularly the chief judge, are responsible for the administration of the court. In effect, the judges are a board of directors; the chief judge is the chairman of the board and the court administrator is the executive officer responsible for executing policies adopted by the board. Alternately stated, the chief judge (or judges) and the court’s administrator form the court’s leadership team for policy making and implementation.

In the Circuit and Probate courts, the Court Administrator provides a clear vision and leadership for the Courts. He is responsible for all administrative functions including strategic planning initiatives, caseload management, personnel and financial management, succession planning and more. There is direct accountability to the chief judges of the Circuit and Probate courts. Daily operational management and oversight of the courts is conducted by the Courts’ Leadership Team, including the Court Administrator, Director of Juvenile Services, Friend of the Court, Trial Division Director and Probate Register. The Courts’ mission, vision and values guide the Team.

**Mission:** To administer justice and restore wholeness in a manner that inspires public trust.

**Vision:** As a leader among courts, we exemplify high standards for justice and public service.

**“COURTS” Values:** C = Collaboration; O = Operational Excellence; U = Understanding; R = Responsiveness; T = Transparency; and S = Service.

## High Performance Court Framework

The High Performance Court Framework (HPCF) provides a set of organizing concepts that describe what a high-performing court seeks to accomplish. It is based on the premise that courts seek to conduct business according to four guiding administrative principles: 1) customer perspective, 2) internal operating perspective, 3) innovation perspective, and 4) social value perspective. These principles help courts identify important areas of performance to measure, and further, show a court how it can and should develop a managerial culture supportive to a constantly changing environment.

The HPCF suggests a series of flexible steps courts can take to integrate performance improvement into ongoing operations. The steps include:

- Focusing on key administrative principles that clarify high performance, and articulating what judges and managers care about in quality administration;
- Understanding how a court's managerial culture can promote common goals and collegial cooperation;
- Developing the capacity to measure performance by identifying coherent categories of performance measurement; and
- Learning to use the results for procedural refinements and communication with a variety of stakeholders.

Together the steps form a functional system or quality cycle courts can follow to enhance the quality of the administration of justice.

Through a State Justice Institute grant awarded to the 20th Circuit Court, the National Center for State Courts joined with the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts to introduce the High Performance Court Framework to Court staff and implement the high performing court process. During 2012, the Courts applied the Framework activities and tools to the work environment –measuring success and determining administrative principles as they are employed within the Courts.



# Major Initiatives

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## Court Wide Initiatives

**Strategic Planning Initiative** - To provide a court specific focus on state and local efforts to improve performance measurement, the Strategic Planning Oversight Team (SPOT) received grant funding and contracted with the National Center for State Courts to implement the High Performance Court Framework. This Framework meets the requirements of the Michigan Supreme Court and provides a “balanced scorecard” approach to the development and monitoring of court performance measures.

**Building Bench Strength (BBS)** - This innovative talent development/talent management program continues to focus on the professional development of court employees to ensure the courts have “the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time”. Throughout 2012, participation in BBS resulted in the promotions of 15 court employees.

### Grant Revenue = \$475,388 (Calendar Year 2012)

- Byrne Memorial Fund – Adult Drug Treatment Court (\$120,000 for an Independent Program Evaluation and Training)
- First Presbyterian Church – Adult Drug Treatment Court (\$4,500)
- Michigan Drug Court Grants – Juvenile Drug Treatment Court (\$40,000); Adult Treatment Court (\$120,000)
- State Justice Institute – Technical Assistance Grant for High Performance Court Framework (\$50,000)
- Legal Self Help Center
  - JSJ Foundation (\$2,500)
  - Coopersville Area Community Foundation (\$388)
  - Allendale Area Community Foundation (\$1,000)
  - Holland/Zeeland Area Community Foundation (\$10,000)
- Title 1 Educational Grant (\$127,000)

**Intern Program** - This court-wide intern program was developed and improved to maximize the use of volunteer resources and compliment staffing needs.

**Website Updates** - Court information on the County’s website – [www.miottawa.org](http://www.miottawa.org) – was reviewed for content and ease of use. Modifications were made to provide increased accessibility and a user-friendly format.

**Collaborations/Partnerships** - During 2012, the Courts increased collaborations/partnerships through shared training and joint meetings, e.g. Bench/Bar, DHS Petition Writing, DHS New Worker Orientation Training and P.A.C.K. (Professionals Advocating and Caring for Kids) programs.

# Major Initiatives

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## Divisional Initiatives – Juvenile Services

### Child Care Fund Revenue

- The Child Care Fund reimburses the County 50%.
- Increased State reimbursements by approx. \$1,718,136 by completing the moving of staff into the Child Care Fund through program modifications that are in compliance with the Child Care Fund.
- Moved six line-item accounts to the Child Care Fund totaling \$33,919.

### County Juvenile Officer Revenue = \$103,848

The Court continued to identify four County Juvenile Officer positions, based on a population formula, which provides significant salary reimbursement.

**Juvenile Services Collections** - The Reimbursement Team focused on the implementation of best practices for the collection of attorney fees and placement costs. A 70% increase was realized in the collection of attorney fees (100% retained by the General Fund), as well as a 25% increase in the collection of placement costs (50% retained by the Child Care Fund).

### Detention Bed Rental Revenue = \$ 642,688 (Fiscal Year 2012)

Relationships developed with State professional associations led to increased bed rental contracts. In 2012 bed rental and treatment bed contracts were negotiated with the following counties:

- |             |             |                |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| • Barry     | • Kent      | • Muskegon     |
| • Bay       | • Newaygo   | • Newaygo      |
| • Dickinson | • Mason     | • Presque Isle |
| • Gratiot   | • Marquette | • Roscommon    |
| • Ingham    | • Midland   |                |

### CourtStream – Web Based Case Management System

As metrics for programming continue to be increasing in demand, the CourtStream Case Management System allows the Court to respond. Continual enhancements that allow the Court to reflect data and measure outcomes provides needed information on which programming decisions are made.

### Juvenile Drug Treatment Court (JDTC)

- 1,128 Drug tests were randomly administered to JDTC participants
- 34 tested positive throughout the program year, reflecting on the effectiveness of the intervention.



## Major Initiatives

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**Shakespeare Behind/Beyond Bars** - The evidence-based pilot program, Shakespeare Behind/Beyond Bars (SBB), believes it is imperative to create transformational programs that provide incarcerated and at risk youth with the tools they need to work toward a future outside correctional institutions and reduce the number of youth who commit crimes that lead to spending their adult lives behind bars. SBB programs employ the vision, mission, values, and techniques that have proven successful since the program was founded in 1995. These programs have been newly implemented in the Juvenile Detention Center and with students at the community-based Juvenile Justice Institute. SBB offers the Court another therapeutic tool to address the individualized treatment needs of court-involved youth.

**Supervised Community Service Program and Service Learning Projects** - In 2012, 534 juveniles performed 3,738 hours of service projects within communities throughout the County. At the prevailing minimum wage for youth of \$7.25 per hour, this represents \$27,100.50 of value for Ottawa County.

### *Divisional Initiatives – Friend of the Court*

#### **“Compromise Arrears in Return for On-Time Support” Program**

In mid-2011, The Ottawa County Friend of the Court was supported by the director of the State Office of Child Support in its initiative to reduce the amount of State-owed debt known as the “Arrears Forgiveness Program”. This program allowed the payer to reduce their state-owed debt at a rate of \$50 per hour by volunteering at various local human service organizations such as Goodwill Industries, the Holland Rescue Mission and Habitat for Humanity. The Arrears Forgiveness Program was implemented from mid-2011 until the end of 2012 and saw more than 30 participants volunteer and reduced a total of \$32,400 during the 18 month life of the program. This program has now ended as the State Office of Child Support has initiated new arrears management strategies as it continues to strive toward more holistic services.

Due to the success of the State Arrears Forgiveness Program, the Friend of the Court was chosen as a pilot county for the State of Michigan’s new arrears management strategy known as the “Compromise Arrears in Return for On-time Support” (CAROTS) program. The CAROTS program, allows for a discharge of State-owed arrears in return for consistent child support payments for a term of two years. This program will allow payers to get back on track with regular support payments and help to build good payment habits going forward. Payers must meet a strict criterion for participation and are not permitted to miss payments and continue to participate in the program. The CAROTS program will not alleviate the obligation or arrearage owed to the custodial parent. As of 12/1/2012, statistical data indicates that the CAROTS program may have more than 600 eligible participants.

## *Major Initiatives*

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### *Divisional Initiatives – Trial Division*

#### **Trial Division Collections (\$1,114,155.82)**

The Trial Division continued to make strides on felony collections, surpassing the \$1M mark for the first time in 2012. A substantial portion of the collections (\$574,137.14) was returned to Ottawa County crime victims in the form of restitution payments. In addition, 988 Writs to Intercept State of Michigan Income Tax Returns were prepared and delivered to the Department of Treasury. To date, more than \$98,000 had been collected from these tax intercepts.

#### **Adult Felony Drug Treatment Court (ADTC)**

- 4,089 Drug tests were administered to ADTC participants
- 27 tested positive throughout the program year, positively reflecting on intervention's effectiveness

### *Divisional Initiatives – Probate Court*

**Volunteer Public Guardian Program** - Due to the increasing demand for guardianship services and the frequent unavailability of family or friends available to serve in this capacity, the Court has researched alternatives. Several jurisdictions in Michigan and other states have established a court annexed public guardian program and recruited community volunteers to serve in this capacity. Through 2012, the Probate Register has reviewed relevant best practices as part of an Institute for Court Management Fellows program and designed a volunteer public guardian program for Ottawa County.

# “To administer justice...”

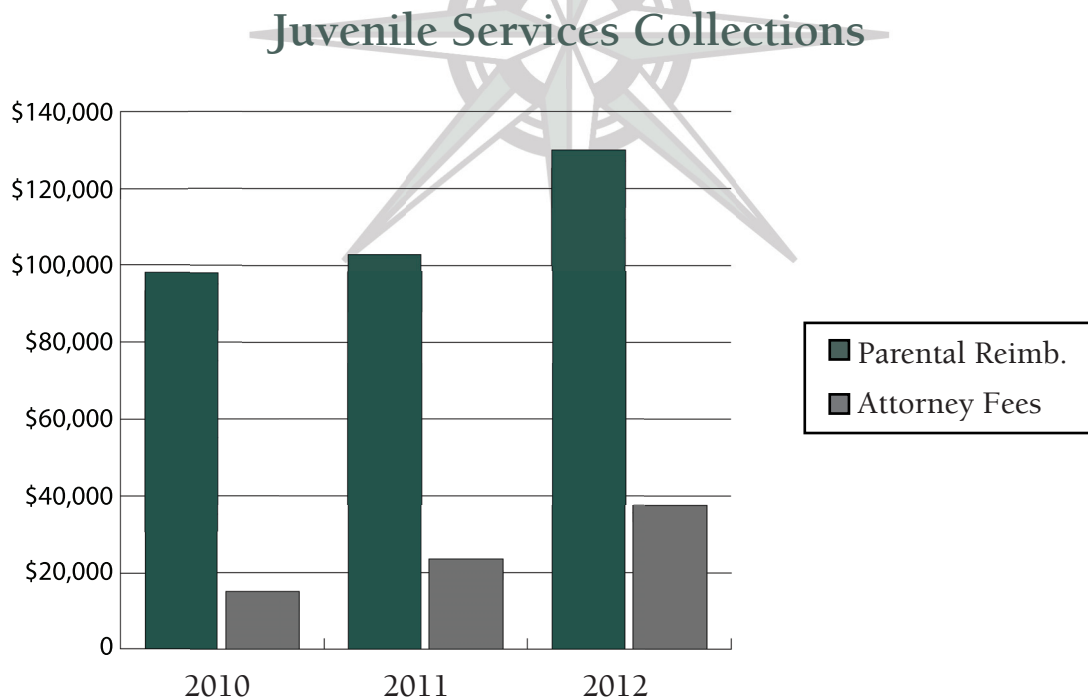
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## Continued Success in Collection Efforts Within Juvenile Services

The results are in, and the efforts of the Reimbursement Team have been successful, once again. The 2011 Annual Report highlighted the success of Juvenile Services in the collection of court costs and attorney fees, with the last paragraph stating “The team is committed to increasing revenue in other areas, with the current focus on parental reimbursement”. Between 2010 and 2011 there was a marginal increase of 5% in collection of parental reimbursement.

In 2012, through implementation of best practices, Juvenile Services Reimbursement Team improved collections by 25%. Additionally, a 70% increase was realized in the collection of attorney fees, while maintaining the level of collections for court costs/fines.

The Team continues to regularly meet to review best practices and has shifted their focus to improving the process through installment payment agreements, scheduling regular financial meetings, show cause hearings and the issuance of bench warrants.



## *Friend of the Court's Warrant Team*

The Friend of the Court's Warrant Team is comprised of three people -- a FOC Investigator, a Parent Locate Specialist, and an Ottawa County Sheriff's Deputy. Each year the 20th Circuit Court issues warrants for the arrest of payers for non-payment of child support. These warrants include the issuance of both civil warrants and felony warrants. In 2012, the court issued 1,595 warrants. The FOC Warrant Team is responsible for resolving these warrants and through the use of various enforcement tools was able to resolve 1,769 warrants in 2012.

The FOC Warrant Team is involved in two programs that aid in the success of the child support enforcement program. The first program is a vehicle immobilization program where an immobilization device (aka "a boot") is placed on vehicles registered to individuals that have outstanding warrants. The "boot" gets a payer's attention and is not removed until the warrant is resolved through payment made toward the outstanding child support balance. Since its inception, the booting program is responsible for collections of \$17,670.79.



The Warrant Team also works closely with the Ottawa County Prosecutor's Office in connection with felony non-support prosecutions. If a payer's failure to make payments meets a certain threshold, the Prosecuting Attorney may choose to charge the payer with a criminal offense. Felony non-support prosecutions are used when payers, with an ability to pay, regularly and consistently fail to pay their support obligation and that obligation exceeds \$5,000.00. From July through December 2012, the felony non-support program was responsible for lump sum payments totaling \$96,054.18.

In December 2012, the FOC Warrant Team set a new record of monthly collections, when the team collected \$81,684.41 to resolve outstanding warrants. Eight payments alone totaled \$49,454.18, including \$27,500.00 paid by a payer to avoid extradition from California. Overall in 2012, the Warrant Team was responsible for collections totaling \$744,882.07.

## *Volunteer Guardianship Program Explored by the Ottawa County Probate Court*

The Probate Court is responsible for appointing guardians for incapacitated adults and minors who cannot make responsible decisions about themselves or their property. In these cases, the judge must decide whether the person in question has a mental, physical or legal limitation which requires the judge to appoint a guardian to make decisions concerning the person's health and personal life. The Probate Court is also responsible for reviewing guardianships at the end of one year and every three years thereafter for adults. For minors the court is responsible for reviewing the guardianship yearly until the minor reaches age six.



In an effort to enhance the guardianship process for clients, the Probate Court has examined the potential benefits of establishing a volunteer guardianship program. Under the auspices of the National Center for State Courts, research has been conducted to explore the elements of such a program. In addition, various programs were studied in Michigan and other states to explore aspects that include recruitment/retention, management, and training. The viability of implementing such a program in Ottawa County in 2013 will be determined upon completion of this study.

## *Trial Division Implements Effective Felony Collections*

In 2012, 986 writs for Michigan Income Tax Intercepts were submitted to the Michigan Department of Treasury for those with outstanding financial obligations to the Court. Over \$98,000 was collected through these income tax intercept efforts.

During 2012, the Circuit Court, Trial Division met a significant milestone for felony collections. Through the efforts of two Collections Clerks, using comprehensive monitoring systems, writs of garnishment, and workable payment plans for the parties involved, the Court collected over \$1,000,000 (\$1,114,156, total) in felony financial obligations. Of the monies collected, \$574,137 was collected on behalf of and distributed to victims of crime within the Ottawa County Community.

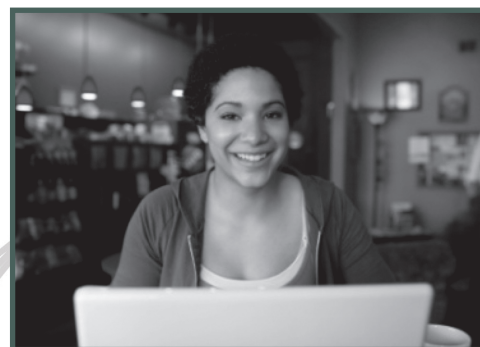
## *...and restore wholeness...*

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### *The Juvenile Justice Institute: Re-engaging Court Involved Youth in Education*

One of the most challenging and important tasks for juveniles involved in the juvenile justice system is completing school. The 20th Circuit Court/Juvenile Services Division, in partnership with the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD) provides quality education to youth who are on probation, who are expelled or long term suspended, through the Juvenile Justice Institute (JJI).

Located in the lower level of the Department of Human Services building in Holland, the Juvenile Justice Institute (JJI) is committed to providing a school environment that allows students to grow academically, emotionally and socially. This is accomplished using a team approach with teachers, probation officers, therapists and other community supports, focusing on each student's needs. The goal at JJI is to build meaningful connections with students to encourage students to reach their full potential. JJI recognizes the need to partner with community members to accomplish this goal. Each year staff work to provide students with community connections. For instance, in 2012, JJI partnered with the Boys and Girls Club of Holland to provide gym time for students to participate in physical activity. Also, staff worked with each student's local school to ensure credit transfer and a smooth re-entry back to their school upon completion of the JJI program, whenever possible.



Traditional and non-traditional methods are used to assist students in achieving success in the school setting. JJI teaching staff are able to teach to the classroom as a whole, provide focused individual instruction as well as on-line learning opportunities. Educational opportunities, such as volunteering at the Ottawa Area Center in the Project MOVE program, are provided outside the classroom setting to enhance the school experience. Students are encouraged to engage in a number of enrichment activities such as student council, volunteer work, Barnabas Ministries Lakeshore Honors Basketball League and the most recently added, evidenced based program —Shakespeare Beyond Bars, which offers theatrical encounters with personal and social issues to juveniles involved in the juvenile justice system and allowing them to develop life skills that will ensure their successful reintegration into society. Currently, 100% of the students participate in this voluntary program. Parents are involved in the students' success through various means, including parent-teacher conferences.

Although this is a Court ordered program, the hope for JJI students is to successfully re-engage in their personal educational experience and ultimately, assist them with a positive transition to their home school.

## *Adult Drug Treatment Court Restores Lives*

The Adult Drug Treatment Court (ADTC) is one of three specialty dockets or “problem-solving courts” in Ottawa County. Since the program began in 2005, the dedicated members of the drug court team have worked with offenders battling severe alcohol and drug addictions. Many offenders also suffer from co-occurring mental health disorders.

The ADTC accepts 30 participants at a time, who are required to attend treatment services (e.g., Intensive Outpatient Treatment, AA meetings, and other counseling as ordered); submit to random drug testing, home and work checks; attend bi-weekly court sessions; pay outstanding restitution, fines, and court costs; and face immediate consequences for any program violation. During 2012, the ADTC gained 27 new participants and successfully graduated 14 participants.

To date, there have been 163 participants and 132 discharges, with a 61% success rate. Approximately 32,000 drug tests have been administered with only 1% testing positive, indicating a relapse.

Since 2005, the ADTC has been financially sustained by a variety of federal, state and local grants. In FY 2012, these grants included the Michigan Drug Court Grant (administered by the State Court Administrative Office) obtained to cover operational costs; a federal grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance for program evaluation and training; and a grant awarded by the First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven, allowing the ADTC to assist with the medical needs of several program participants.

Although there is a tremendous amount of work associated with every participant, the personal reward and benefit to our community is incalculable each time an offender is able to enter recovery in a meaningful and lasting manner.



## *Juvenile Detention Residents Are Inspired by Local Novelist*

*“To you the idea to kidnap Chase Dobson might seem like a mistake. But to us...we were just trying to stop him from being so... evil. We just... we had to stop him. No one helps kids like us. Not at my school. We aren't the important kids. We knew it wouldn't stop unless we stopped it ourselves.”*

*Excerpt from Four Secrets*

The residents of the Ottawa County Juvenile Detention Center had the opportunity to meet the author of these words taken from her latest novel Four Secrets. Local Grand Haven author, Margaret Willey, completed much of her research for her latest novel, Four Secrets, at the Ottawa County Juvenile Detention Center, which helped to engage students in English and art classes for a collaborative teaching project. The students in the Center were able to closely identify with the main characters and enjoyed finding the similarities between the fictional Ferndale Detention Center and the Ottawa County Juvenile Detention Center. As a culminating activity, Margaret Willey brought her research “full circle” by returning to the Center for an assembly where she discussed the writing process.





## *Alternative Dispute Resolution Is a Successful Option in the Trial Division*

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is widely used across the nation to encourage parties to settle disputes informally and confidentially. ADR empowers and enables participating parties to develop and seek mutually acceptable solutions, which they choose to meet their needs. Generally, ADR uses a neutral third party to help the parties communicate, develop ideas and resolve disputes.

The Trial Division uses several forms of ADR. All general civil cases are subject to alternative dispute resolution and in such cases where a monetary award is sought, parties are ordered to an ADR process called Case Evaluation. In Case Evaluation, a panel of three attorneys, who are certified to meet the court's ADR plan requirements, oversee this process. In 2012, the 20th Circuit court ordered 234 civil cases to mediation. Of those cases, 84 were heard by a panel of Case Evaluators. The remaining 150 cases were settled prior to the case evaluation date.

Mediation, a second form of ADR, is a process by which a neutral third party facilitates communication between the parties, assists in identifying issues, and helps explore solutions to promote a mutually acceptable settlement. In 2012, the 20th Circuit Court began ordering parties in divorce cases to mediation in an attempt to improve communication and relationships between the parties. When an agreement is reached, the mediator drafts a resolution agreement for both parties to sign. When parties are unable to reach an agreement, the case remains on the Court's trial docket.

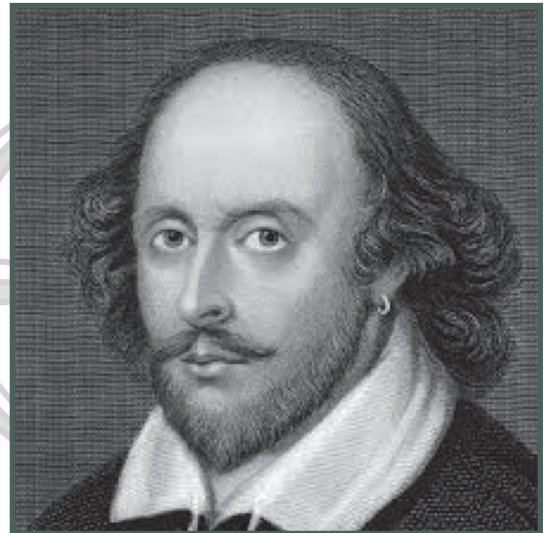
Beginning in November of 2012, seven domestic cases were ordered to mediation. Five of those cases were resolved through the mediation process. In light of this success, the 20th Circuit Court is currently revising its ADR Plan to direct all divorce cases through the mediation process. This change will take effect in 2013.



## *Juvenile Services Implements Shakespeare Behind Bars and Shakespeare Beyond Bars Programs*

Utilizing the Restorative Circle of Reconciliation (RCR) model, the 20th Circuit Court, Juvenile Services, contracted with founder, Curt L. Tofteland, to implement the evidence based Shakespeare Behind Bars program in the Ottawa County Juvenile Detention Center and the Shakespeare Beyond Bars program in the year round, court managed school, the Juvenile Justice Institute, in late 2012.

The RCR model was developed over a lifetime of Mr. Tofteland's experience building successful, artistic circles of community within the professional, as well as education theatre settings. Through this process, he honed his experiences into building transformational circles. By constructing a set of "values" shared by members of each circle rather than "rules" being imposed by the circle's leader, circles of trust emerge and allow participants to plumb the depths of their life experiences to recover what it means to be a human being. Each day, circle members consciously choose to live life's four questions... 1) Who am I? 2) What do I love? 3) How will I live my life knowing I will die?, and 4) What is my gift to human-kind? Applying the healing process of the RCR model within the juvenile justice world of detention and post-detention, art, theatre and the works of William Shakespeare are used to immerse juvenile offenders into the transformational journey from exploring who they were when they committed their crimes, to who they are in the present, to who they wish to become. Through the healing process of self-examination, juvenile offenders assemble the tools they need to evolve into agents of change, not only for themselves, but also, as potential leaders within the communities in which they reside.



Both programs are co-gender, and youth must be court ordered into the program. To date, 100% of the youth in the Juvenile Justice Institute are participating in the Program, and the Court is encouraged by the member's enthusiasm.

## *National Adoption Day 2012*

Throughout the United States, there is a significant number of children awaiting adoption. In 2012, 2,538 children were adopted in Michigan and currently, approximately 3,000 children are in foster care have the goal of adoption. Ottawa County is reflective of the state averages and the Court works with the Department of Human Services and several private agencies to place children in adoptive homes, whenever possible.

On Tuesday, November 22, 2012, the 20th Judicial Circuit Court celebrated National Adoption Day along with 32 other courts in Michigan. The theme for Adoption Day was “Giving Thanks for Families.” This day honored adoptive families and was the ninth year the Court and Ottawa County participated in the celebration.

The celebration began at 9:00 am at the Ottawa County Fillmore Street Complex in the Circuit Court courtrooms. Several speakers offered information on adoption, the need for adoptive and foster families and the lifelong benefits of adoption to children. In addition, formal court hearings were held with Judge Mark Feyen and Judge Kent Engle and adoptions were confirmed with seven families, reflecting eight adopted children. Following each adoption confirmation, guests and families participated in a reception, a professional photographer took family pictures and there were gift bags for each adoptee.

This event seeks to raise the awareness of the public regarding the adoption process, the number of children who need permanent homes and the urgent need for additional foster homes.



*...in a manner that inspires public trust.”*

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### *Legal Self-Help Center Expansion*

In 2012, the Legal Self-Help Center (LSHC) expanded its services in an effort to better serve the citizens of Ottawa County. By operating several “satellite” centers, the LSHC assists patrons who may have difficulty finding transportation to the Center in Grand Haven.

At the end of 2012, the Legal Self-Help Center began offering services to patrons at the Probate Court. The LSHC at the Probate Court is located in courtroom C in the Juvenile Services Building on the Ottawa County Fillmore Street campus at 12120 Fillmore Street, West Olive and is staffed every Monday from 9 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

In early 2013, the LSHC will open a satellite Center in Holland. The Holland LSHC will be located at the 58th District Court building on West 8th Street. The Holland center will be staffed from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at least one day per week.

In 2012, Legal Self-Help Center volunteers logged over 1,950 hours in the Center and served over 3,800 patrons. Since the center opened in 2010, 10,305 patrons have been served.



## 2012 Community Report Card

For a number of years, the court has looked at various methods to measure the efficacy of probation and other court programs. In addition, the court has also sought a way to illustrate the day to day restorative activities utilized with young people under the court's jurisdiction. The 2012 Community Report Card measures court services used to assess juveniles' responses to supervision; it also provides a tool for court administration to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and community-based interventions.

	2010	2011	2012
Separate juveniles petitioned to the court			861
Number of cases closed ( <i>some cases moved to diversion in 2011</i> )	793	593	520
<b>COMMUNITY PROTECTION</b>			
Percentage of juveniles who had no adjudications or convictions for offenses while under supervision	90.7%	90.7%	91.9%
Percentage of juveniles who had no positive drug tests while under supervision	89.3%	84.4%	89.2%
<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>			
Number of community service hours ordered	5175	4252	4163
Number of community services hours completed	5202	4315	4624
Percentage of juveniles who were ordered to pay restitution and paid in full	74.3%	77.8%	88.2%
<b>COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT</b>			
Number of juveniles who participated in at least one competency development program	584	309*	260
Percentage of juveniles who successfully completed the competency development program	92.1%	86.0%	97.7%
Percentage of juveniles enrolled in school at time of closure	95.8%	97.8%	95.6%
<b>OVERALL</b>			
Percentage of juveniles discharged from supervision as successful	95.2%	95.6%	95.6%
<b>DIVERSION</b>			
Number of juveniles placed in diversion program		177	159
Percentage of juveniles in diversion who successfully complied with the program		94.4%	88.7%

\*The reduction in this area is the result of a transition in programming

## Friend of the Court Performance Measures to Assist Children & Families

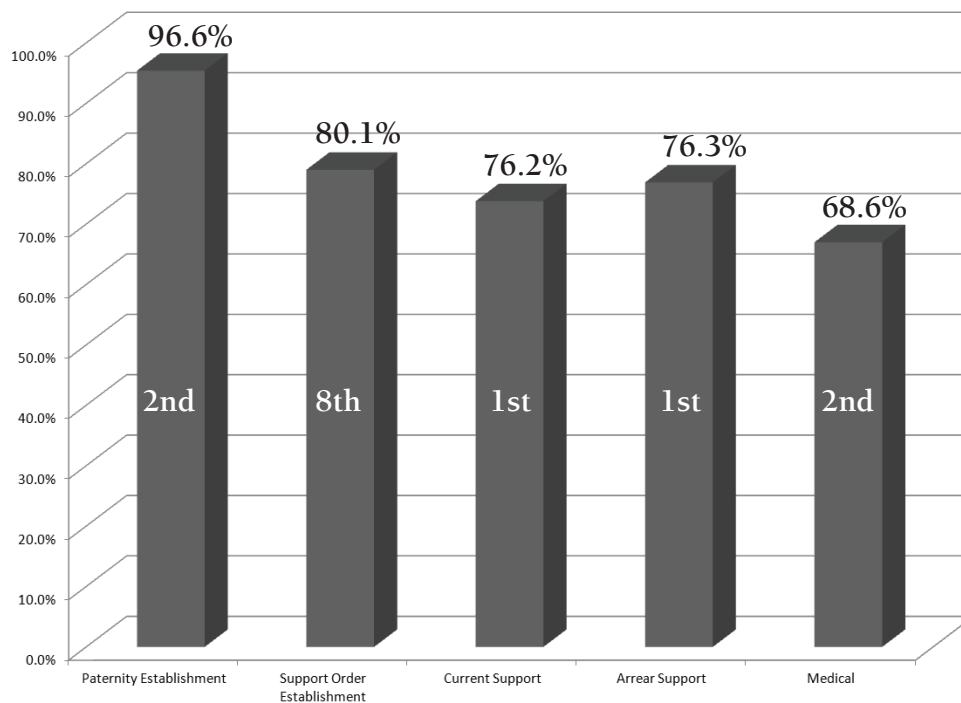
Child support collection falls under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. The Friend of the Court office operates as a IV-D agency and a large part of the expense of operating the office (approximately 66%) is reimbursed by Federal funds through a State Cooperative Reimbursement Contract.

The Friend of the Court office also defrays operating costs by earning incentive dollars based on performance. As set forth in the 1998 Child Support Performance and Incentive Act, the performance of each IV-D agency is measured in five key areas: 1) Paternity Establishment, 2) Support Order Establishment, 3) Collections on Current Support, 4) Collections on Arrears, and 5) Cost Effectiveness. Medical support establishment/enforcement is also measured, although it is not currently a factor that results in earned incentives. It may be included as a performance factor in the future.

When the Friend of the Court office in Ottawa County measures itself against the sixteen (16) largest counties in Michigan, its performance is notable in all areas. This high performance not only helps secure child support for families and children in Ottawa County, but also, results in earned incentive dollars that reduce the amount of Ottawa County general fund dollars needed to fund the program. In 2012, the total Federal incentive dollars earned was \$328,273.00.

Additionally, the Friend of the Court was ranked as third out of the sixteen (16) largest counties in Michigan with respect to cost effectiveness, collecting \$11.00 for every dollar spent.

### Ottawa County Comparison to Large County 2012 Performance Levels



## *Juvenile Detention and ACA*

The 20th Circuit Court/Juvenile Detention completed their 2012 ACA audit review and received the highest evaluation in their ACA accreditation history - 99.2% compliance! The American Correctional Association (ACA) and the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections (CAC) are private, nonprofit organizations that administer the only national accreditation program for all components of adult and juvenile corrections. Their purpose is to promote improvement in the management of correctional agencies through the administration of a voluntary accreditation program and the ongoing development and revision of relevant, useful standards. The 20th Circuit Court/Juvenile Detention is the only juvenile detention facility in Michigan that is accredited. It is a committed and caring staff, and a well-run facility, that has directly contributed to this outstanding score. This external evaluation of the facility confirms that Ottawa County has one of the best juvenile facilities in the land.



Comments from the auditors:

- 1) The 20th Circuit Court has a “gem” of a facility, remarking that it is difficult for facilities to maintain the ACA standards in an ongoing manner as the 20th Circuit Court has been able to do. They also remarked about the sense of caring and accountability at every level is “palpable”.
- 2) The Detention Center environment was described as a very “sophisticated educational, treatment and detention milieu which works extremely well”. They were impressed the teachers manage their classrooms well and their classrooms are an extension of the mutual respect they noticed throughout the building. They stated that they do not witness this in other facilities.
- 3) The Lighthouse and Substance Abuse programs were described as “outstanding”. They were impressed with the level of education, concern and treatment in both programs. They described the therapist as engaging, effective and respected. There was significant support for Lighthouse and for this program to be; “published, documented, etc. You should be singing its praises beyond Michigan because others could learn from what you are doing in that program!”
- 4) The exchange of information through the shift change process really “allowed for consistency throughout the facility and also, contributed to the respect of the residents toward staff” because they know everyone is on the same “page”.

Overall, it was clear the auditors enjoyed talking with the detention staff and the residents, and they were pleased with the operation. They commented several times, it is not often they see a facility that merges the corrections and treatment models in a manner that is effective, mutually respectful and beneficial to the residents and suggested this model be marketed to other facilities.

The three-year accreditation award was presented in conjunction with the American Correctional Association 2013 Winter Conference on January 28, 2013 in Houston, Texas.

## *New CAROTS Pilot Program*

In mid-2011, The Ottawa County Friend of the Court was supported by the director of the State Office of Child Support in its initiative to reduce the amount of State-owed debt known as the “Arrears Forgiveness Program”. This program allowed the payer to reduce their state-owed debt at a rate of \$50 per hour by volunteering at various local human service organizations such as Goodwill Industries, the Holland Rescue Mission, and Habitat for Humanity. The Arrears Forgiveness Program was implemented from mid-2011 until the end of 2012 and saw more than 30 participants volunteer and reduced a total of \$32,400 during the 18 month life of the program. This program has now ended as the State Office of Child Support has initiated new arrears management strategies as it continues to strive toward more holistic services.

Due to the success of the State Arrears Forgiveness Program, the Friend of the Court was chosen as a pilot county for the State of Michigan’s new arrears management strategy known as the “Compromise Arrears in Return for On-time Support” (CAROTS) program. The CAROTS program, allows for a discharge of State-owed arrears in return for consistent child support payments for a term of two years. This program will allow payers to get back on track with regular support payments and help to build good payment habits going forward. Payers must meet a strict criterion for participation and are not permitted to miss payments and continue to participate in the program. The CAROTS program will not alleviate the obligation or arrearage owed to the custodial parent. As of 12/1/2012, statistical data indicates that the CAROTS program may have more than 600 eligible participants.





## *Citizen's Law School*

Law Day was established by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1958 to raise public awareness of American law and justice and its impact on our lives. In 1961, Congress designated it as an annual, nationwide event.

In celebration of Law Day 2012, the Legal Self-Help Center (LSHC) presented the second annual Citizen's Law School. During the program held the first week of May, the public attended seminars presented by various members of the legal community. The Citizen's Law School program included seminars on Veteran's Benefits, Consumer Protection, Bankruptcy, Employment Law, Drug Court, Estate Planning, Juvenile Treatment Programs, Medical Marijuana, Anatomy of a Lawsuit, "Wicked" Ottawa County, Animal Law and Corporal Punishment.



## Caseload Trends...Circuit Court

TRIAL DIVISION	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% Change (2011-12)
Appeals	45	48	51	53	61	+15.1%
Criminal	1127	1090	1048	918	988	+7.6%
Civil	630	600	554	423	462	+9.2%
Total Trial Division Filings	1802	1738	1653	1394	1511	+8.4%
FAMILY DIVISION (Includes FOC & Juvenile Services)	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% Change (2011-12)
Divorce	993	1057	1039	1101	1096	-.5%
Other Domestic Relations	625	517	476	423	478	+13.0%
Personal Protection Orders	695	836	738	783	755	-3.6%
Delinquency (per SCAO 2008 - 2012; does not include Probation Violations)	1500	1674	1421	1332	1273	-4.0%
Traffic	27	31	31	20	20	NC
Child Protective	101	79	93	83	78	-6.0%
Adoptions	163	149	147	142	120	-15.5%
Misc. Family	65	50	72	67	71	+6.0%
Total Family Division Filings	4169	4393	4017	3951	3891	-1.0%
<b>Grand Total Filings &amp; Reopend Cases</b>	<b>5971</b>	<b>6131</b>	<b>5670</b>	<b>5345</b>	<b>5402</b>	<b>+1.0%</b>

For additional caseload information see:

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/summaries.htm>

## *Caseload Facts – Trial Division*

The Trial Division (Grand Haven) caseload includes appeals, criminal and civil cases. In addition, the Trial Division handles the domestic relations portion of the Family Division docket.

Throughout 2012 Chief Judge Post and Judge Hulsing presided over all criminal cases and 80% of the civil cases. Judge Van Allsburg heard 20% of the civil docket, all appellate cases and 50% of the domestic relations case assignments. Judge Engle was assigned 50% of the domestic relations cases, and he shared the personal protection order petitions (adult and juvenile) with Judge Van Allsburg. In addition, Judge Engle conducts court two days per week at the Fillmore Complex with a mixed docket of juvenile and child protective proceedings.

From 2011 to 2012 the appellate caseload increased significantly by 15.1%, while the criminal and civil caseload (new filings and reopened cases) increased by 7.6 % and 9.2%, respectively. Overall, the Trial Division experienced an 8.4% increase in new filings and reopened cases from 2011 to 2012. As a result of the increased workload related to certain case types, the Chief Judge plans to authorize a realignment of case distribution in 2013.

In addition to managing a diverse and complex docket, the Trial Division is responsible for the public and judicial law libraries (including new acquisitions and maintenance). The Trial Division also manages an active collections program with defendants who are ordered to pay restitution, court costs, fines, fees, etc. The outcome of the collections program in 2012 was payment of \$1,114,156 to the Court, surpassing the \$1M mark for the first time in the Court's history. This represents a 21% increase in collections from 2011, which was due to the support of the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners when they adopted the Court's proposal to add a second felony collections clerk. Approximately 51% of these payments are returned to victims of crime as restitution, representing a 6% increase from 2011. Other payments cover statutorily mandated fees and partially reimburse the County for funds expended in the daily operation of the Court.

## *Caseload Facts – Family Division/Friend of the Court (FOC)*

Throughout 2012, Friend of the Court staff handled a Title IV-D caseload (child support) of 12,177 cases, representing a 3% decrease from 2011. During the same time period, however, there was also a 3% overall increase in new divorce and other domestic relations filings. To enforce court orders on these cases, 7,847 show cause hearings were conducted (where parties are ordered to “show cause” why they should not be held in contempt of court for failing to obey a valid court order), 1,753 bench warrants were issued, and \$34.7 million in child support payments were collected and disbursed to families in need (6% increase from 2011). In addition to these enforcement efforts, staff directly assisted clients by scheduling 4,432 appointments (11% increase) and meeting with 1,889 walk-in clients (12% increase). To help ensure child support orders are updated to reflect significant changes in circumstances, staff conducted 2,382 case reviews and recommended modification where appropriate. These support reviews increased by 10% from 2011 to 2012. Based on federal child support performance measures, the 20th Circuit FOC is one of the most effective operations in Michigan, ranking 3rd of the 16 largest counties and collecting \$11 for every dollar spent.

Besides the child support enforcement efforts of the Friend of the Court, there were 224 cases in 2012 where the 20th Circuit Court received a petition for a special assessment regarding child custody or parenting time issues. In 56% of these cases, FOC staff conducted an extensive investigation and provided the Court with recommendations. The remaining 44% of these cases were resolved by diversion conferences conducted by FOC staff, thereby saving significant time and resources for all involved. Often, custody investigators are required to appear in court and testify regarding the investigation/recommendations. In addition to these in-depth child custody assessments, the FOC further supports the Court by providing detailed psychological evaluations in select cases. These evaluations are conducted by an FOC investigator with the necessary training and credentials to provide psychological services.

## *Caseload Facts – Family Division/Juvenile Services*

Court personnel, like most community leaders, understand children represent the future. As a result, when 1,273 new and reopened juvenile petitions and 20 traffic cases arrived at Juvenile Services throughout 2012, a concerted effort was made to ensure appropriate programming was available for delinquent youth, family, caregivers and related agencies. To professionally assess and manage delinquency cases, Juvenile Services staff provided a variety of services within the community. These services included 13,124 contacts with the juvenile, the parent(s) and ancillary contacts with schools, counselors, etc. Although the overall number of delinquency cases decreased from 2011 to 2012 (-4%), the complexity of many cases dramatically increased, thus requiring a customized approach to the provision of services and, in some cases, more costly residential treatment. This slight downward trend in new delinquency filings is being experienced in Circuit Courts throughout Michigan and may be due in part to the success of existing court programs, as well as the national recession/unemployment situation.

The relative proportions of the juvenile caseload remained stable, however, with drugs and alcohol continuing to be the largest segment of new juvenile petitions (408 cases; 5% increase). Still the 4% overall decrease in these cases from 2011 to 2012 represents a positive trend in the community. The next highest number of new petitions was in assault cases (295 petitions), yet this category decreased 7% from 2011 to 2012. In addition, the filing of 292 larceny petitions represents an 11% downward trend during the same period. All remaining petition categories trended downward except for criminal sexual conduct (CSC), however the relative increase in CSC petitions only includes 4 cases (+8%). The specific variations for the remaining case types from 2011 to 2012 are as follows: breaking and entering (-37%), malicious destruction of property (-41%), ordinance and disorderly (-5%), traffic (+21%), weapons (-14%), arson (0%), and miscellaneous (-3%). In addition to new law violations, the Court received 425 probation violations, representing a 38% increase. The gender breakdown of the juveniles petitioned to court is 67% male and 33% female, representing an increase in delinquent activity by females (+6%).

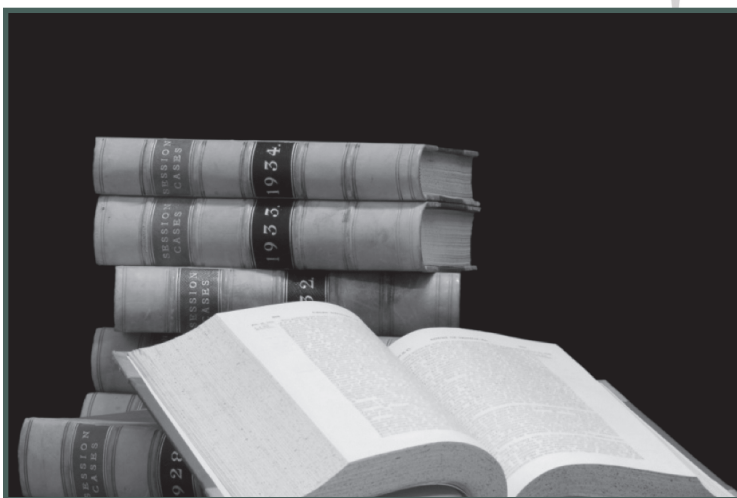
When court-involved youth are on probation or otherwise ordered to receive treatment, there is a continuum of available programs which are designed to assist youth and families in the remediation of offending behaviors. Programs include community-based treatment, supervised community service, anger management, sex offender program, intensive supervision, experiential ropes course, gender-specific groups, individual/group/family counseling and more. In 2012, the Juvenile Services treatment program (Choice) made hundreds of client contacts, providing counseling to court involved youth and their families. The court also provided educational services through the Juvenile Justice Institute to 42 youth; residential placement alternative community support and supervision through the Juvenile Community Justice to 30 youth; and substance abuse treatment through the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court to 30 youth and families (+3.4%).

During 2012, there were 614 admissions to secure detention in the Ottawa County Juvenile Detention Center (+11.6%), representing 9,829 days of service. Many secure detention beds are occupied by Ottawa County youth; however, beds are also rented to other jurisdictions which have no local, secure placement options. Bed rental agreements accounted for \$640,124 (+13%) of new revenue in 2012. In addition, the Court continued development of the Lighthouse Program, a female-specific residential program to address the needs of the court-involved, female population. Several beds within the Lighthouse Program are rented to other counties, generating additional revenue. Juvenile Services continues to explore methods of increasing revenue through contract and service arrangements with other counties.

## *2012 Attorney Referee Activity*

The Circuit Court Attorney Referees are judicial hearing officers who are cross-trained to conduct hearings in the Family Division, including domestic relations hearings (Grand Haven and the Fillmore Complex) and juvenile delinquency and child protective proceedings (Fillmore Complex). Based on the assigned docket, Referees hear testimony and recommend orders in cases involving juvenile delinquency, abuse/neglect, adoption, child support, parenting time, paternity and more. To further assist the Family Division judges, the Referees began handling Pro Confesso divorce hearings on a regular basis toward the end of 2011.

Overall, from 2011 to 2012 Referee hearings increased 4.7%, with a total of 5,727 hearings conducted. In the domestic relations area, the number of hearings increased 6.4% (2,501 hearings), including 1202 child support, 514 parenting time, and 515 paternity hearings conducted at the Ottawa County Courthouse in Grand Haven. At the Fillmore Complex in West Olive, the overall increase in Referee activity was 3.4%, increasing from 3,120 hearings in 2011 to 3,226 hearings in 2012.



Delinquency and child protective petitions are scheduled shortly after filing. Domestic relations hearings are typically scheduled within three to five weeks after filing. In 2012, the Court's three Attorney Referees (2.0 FTE) were assisted by four staff attorneys who volunteered to provide coverage as needed. This was done to help cover an extended medical leave, prevent case delays and provide more convenient service for litigants and attorneys.

## 2012 Attorney Referee Activity

### Family Division/Juvenile Services (Fillmore Complex)

DELINQUENCY PROCEEDINGS	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% Change (2011-12)
Preliminary Inquiries	938	983	776	674	743	+10.2%
Preliminary Hearings*	154	167	169	266	233	-12.4%
Pre-Trial Conferences	422	462	516	552	441	-20.1%
Pleas of Admission/No Contest Hearings	145	587	533	505	605	+19.8%
Original Disposition Hearings	37	211	180	273	299	+9.5
Dispositional Review Hearings	56	70	103	162	133	-17.9%
Supplemental Dispositional Hearings	494	300	169	147	238	+61.9
Consents/Holds/Other	128	501	444	430	430	NC
(*Includes 31 Saturday Hearings)						

CHILD PROTECTIVE PROCEEDINGS	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% Change (2011-12)
Preliminary Inquiries	16	12	29	14	10	-28.6%
Preliminary Hearings	44	28	50	36	55	+52.8%
Release/Consent/Emancipation/ Emergency Removal/Other	63	66	55	61	39	-36.1%
* Includes 4 On Call Hearings						
<b>Total Fillmore Complex Hearings</b>	<b>2494</b>	<b>3387</b>	<b>3024</b>	<b>3120</b>	<b>3226</b>	<b>+3.4%</b>

For additional caseload information see:

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/summaries.htm>

## 2012 Attorney Referee Activity

### Family Division (Grand Haven)

DOMESTIC/CIVIL PROCEEDINGS	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% Change (2011-12)
Support Hearings	1037	1282	1167	1277	1202	-5.9%
Parenting Time Hearings	336	400	468	506	514	+1.6%
<i>Pro Confesso</i> Divorce Hearings*	348	105	3	30	270	+800%
Paternity Arraignments	677	583	559	538	515	-4.3%
*Referees began conducting these hearings on a regular basis 11/29/11						
Total Grand Haven Hearings	2398	2370	2197	2351	2501	+6.4%

ATTORNEY REFEREE HEARINGS	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% Change (2011-12)
Grand Total	4892	5394	5221	5471	5727	+4.7%



## Caseload Trends... Probate Court

OTTAWA COUNTY PROBATE COURT CASELOAD TRENDS	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% Change (2011-12)
Estates, Trusts	386	366	385	394	424	+7.6%
Civil, Other	17	13	14	10	15	+50%
Guardians	186	205	203	209	171	-18.2%
Conservators	58	80	53	47	36	-23.4%
Admissions/Mental Commitments	273	242	278	316	338	+7.0%
Grand Total Filings and Reopened Cases	920	906	933	976	984	+0.8%

For additional caseload information see:

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/summaries.htm>

### Caseload Facts – Probate Court

Ottawa County Probate Court provides services to many who need special consideration including the mentally ill, adults and minors in need of guardians or conservators and families of deceased individuals. The Probate Court has enhanced the Court's effectiveness by the use of mediation, interactive video technology (IVT), document imaging, video court recording, credit card payment capability and on-line case management.

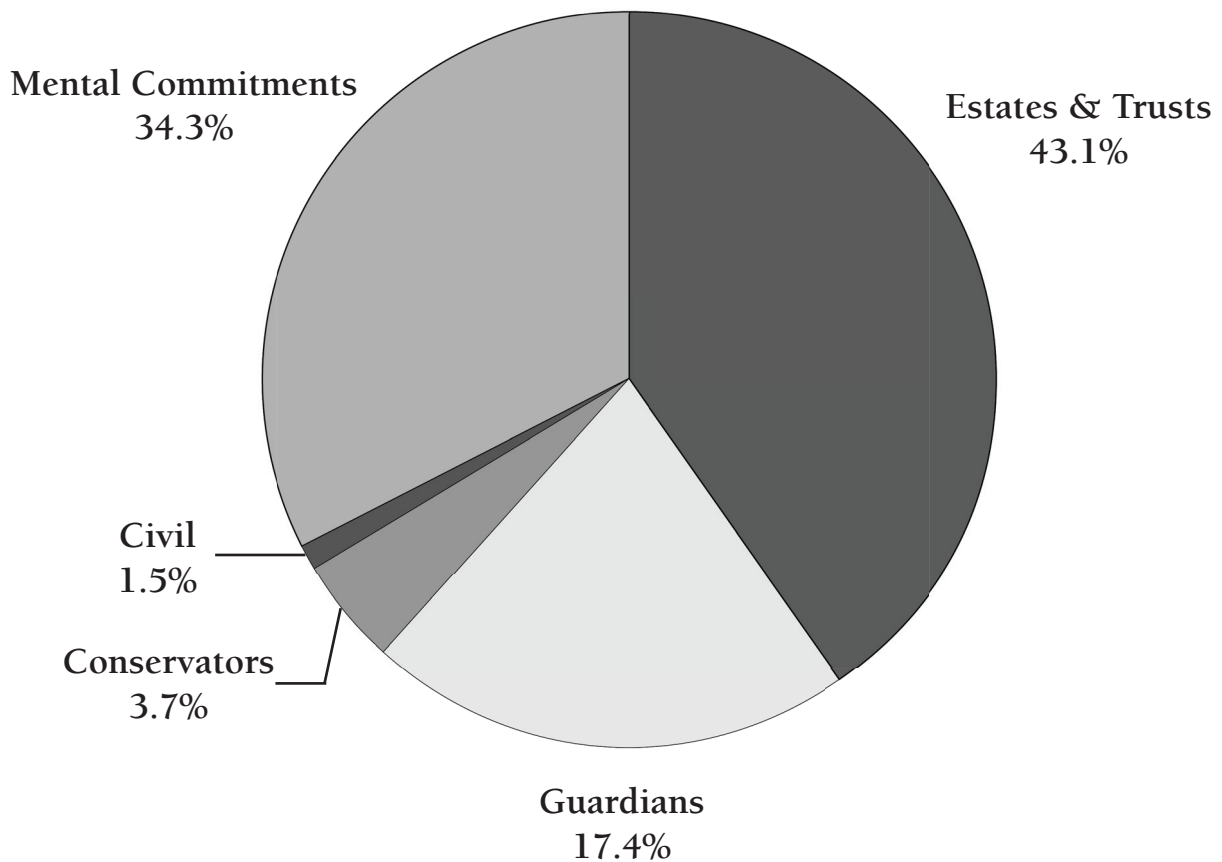
During 2012 the Probate Court experienced a growing caseload trend, with approximately 8,000 open files. Among the new and reopened cases, several categories grew in number, with the exception of guardian and conservator cases which have grown in number in recent years and declined in 2012. Fifty-five percent of the Probate caseload involves individuals needing the protection of the Court in guardianship, conservatorship and mentally ill cases. At the close of 2012, there were 301 adults and 332 minors with guardians appointed by the Court. In cases where individuals need assistance managing financial assets, there were 118 adults and 134 minors with Court appointed conservators. In addition to the regularly appointed guardians, there were an additional 505 (+4%) developmentally disabled individuals with guardians supervised by the Court.

The ability of the Probate staff to cope with the influx of new cases is aided by the County supported "OnBase" document imaging system. Immediate electronic access to all 8,000 Probate files has al-

lowed staff to become more efficient in processing cases. The imaging system also allows for more timely and effective public service for interested parties who are seeking case information. In addition to these case processing efficiencies, the Probate Court strives to be more accessible to the public through its website, <http://www.miottawa.org/CourtsLE/Probate/>, where individuals can locate forms and instructions to guide them through a variety of Probate proceedings.

Ottawa County Probate Judge, Hon. Mark A. Feyen, handles all required Probate matters and assists the 20th Circuit Court by serving as Presiding Judge of the Family Division. He also is the assigned judge for the Adult and Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts.

### *Probate Court – Caseload Distribution*



## *Financial Information*

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As an interdependent branch of government, the Courts generate limited revenue but do not operate like a for-profit business. Other than case filing fees established by the state legislature, the public is not charged for many court services. Instead, the Courts rely on the Michigan Supreme Court to pay for judicial salaries through a legislative appropriation and partially reimburse the County for court-specific operating expenses through the Court Equity Fund.

The Court Equity Fund, (MCL 600.151b), was established in October 1996 to provide limited funding for trial court operations. The fund is disbursed quarterly within the state fiscal year to county governments, based on a statutory formula that establishes each county's share. The formula includes two factors: the caseload activity of the circuit and probate courts and the number of judgeships in each county. The first factor, caseload, takes into account new cases filed for the most recent three years in the circuit and probate courts and compares the county's proportion of these filings for the three years to the total state filings. The second factor compares the number of judgeships within the county to total judgeships for the entire state.

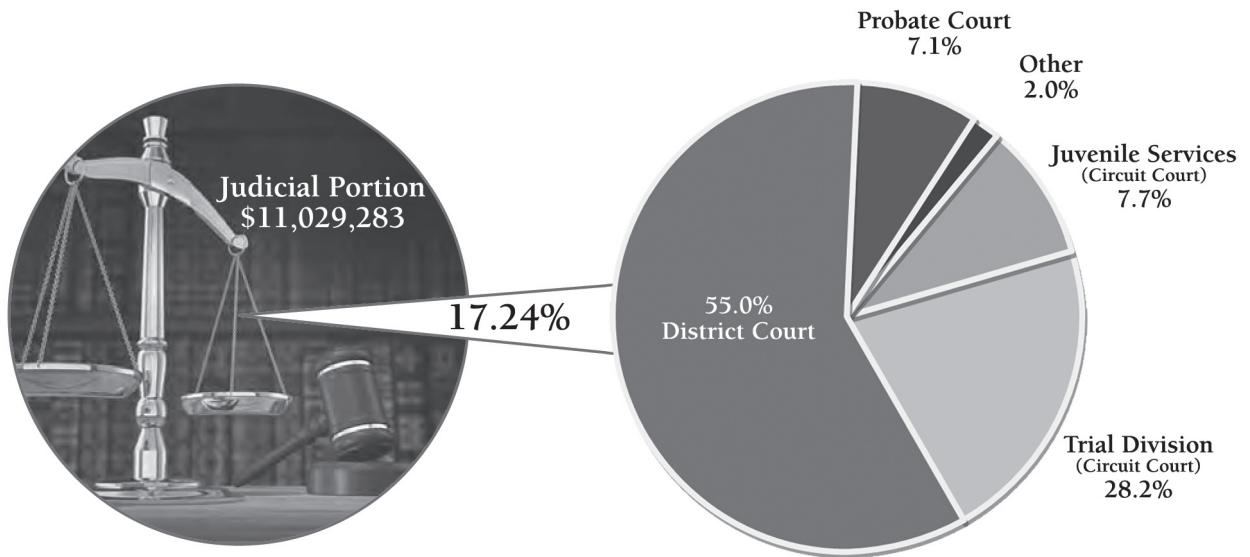
The revenue sources of the Court Equity Fund include state general fund appropriations and multiple sources of restricted revenue that originate from local trial court fees, costs and assessments. Each payment from the fund within the state fiscal year reflects the revenue deposits to the Court Equity Fund for the preceding quarter. Therefore, quarterly payments will vary, reflecting fluctuations in court revenues received. During the past five years, the Court Equity Fund disbursements to Ottawa County exceeded one million dollars per year. In 2012 the Court Equity Fund payment was projected to be \$920,000 (-13%).

The Juror Compensation Reimbursement Fund was created as of January 1, 2003 to provide a source of reimbursement funding to trial courts for legislated increases in juror attendance compensation. Beginning October 1, 2003, jurors were compensated at higher rates (see MCL 600.1344) and trial court funding units could claim reimbursement biannually from the fund for the increased expense.

Other Court expenses are paid in part by federal Title IV-D funds (for child support collection); the Michigan Child Care Fund (Family Division – Juvenile Services programming); state reimbursement for the County Juvenile Officer, and various state and federal grants (e.g., partial Drug Treatment Court funding). The substantial balance is paid through an appropriation from the Ottawa County general fund.

## Ottawa County 2012 General Fund Allocation

In FY 2012, the County general fund expenditure budget as adopted was \$63,986,817 (-1.33%); the judicial portion was \$11,029,283 (+5.57) or 17.24% of the GF budget. Of the 17.24% expenditure, the Circuit Court Trial Division (Fund 1310) was allocated \$3,110,148 (28.2%); Juvenile Services (Fund 1490) was allotted \$847,727 (7.7%); and Probate Court (Fund 1480) received \$778,097 (7.1%). The remaining \$6,052,425 (55%) went to District Court (Fund 1360), with a small 2% allocation to “other”.

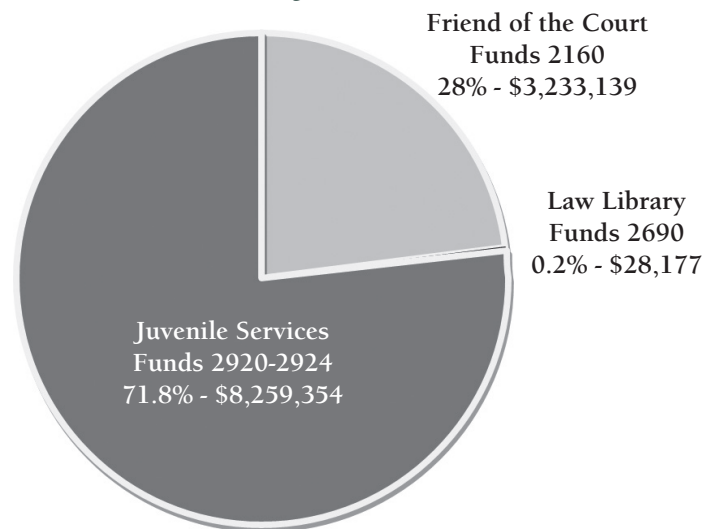


Ottawa County 2012 General Fund Budget - \$63,986,817

2012 Judicial General Fund Budget - \$11,029,283

## Ottawa County 2012 Special Revenue Funds Transfer

Due to other funding streams, the Friend of the Court (FOC), Law Library and Child Care portion of the Juvenile Services budget are not reflected in the general fund budget allocations. For FY 2012, the 20th Circuit received special revenue funds amounting to \$11,520,670; representing a 1.8% increase from FY 2011. These allocations were divided as follows: FOC received a revenue operating transfer of \$3,233,139; the law library received funding in the amount of \$28,177 and the Family Division – Juvenile Services received funding for child care programs of \$8,259,354.



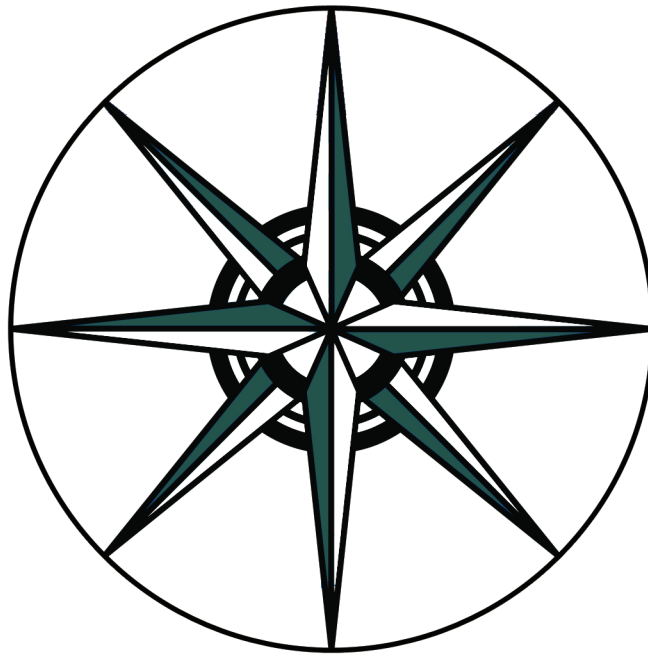
## *About the Cover.. The Compass Rose*

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The Compass Rose has been guiding sailors for centuries. Regardless of whether we are seafarers, we still ask, “Where are we going?” We need a clear plan to guide us to our destination.

Through strategic planning, the 20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts are determining the best path to their destination. The 2012 Annual Report is a reminder of why the plan and destination are important.

The judges and courts’ staff are in the business of administering justice – one case at a time. By doing so, we contribute to a better life within our community, state, nation and world. Perhaps these are lofty goals, but to do less would be a disservice to the rule of law on which our nation was built and to our own potential.



# Quick Guide to the Courts

For Directions to the Courts:  
[www.miottawa.org/Courts](http://www.miottawa.org/Courts)

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For General Information:  
Call any office listed on this page

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For Payment Convenience:

- Make payments online at [www.miottawa.org](http://www.miottawa.org)
  - Call any office to pay by credit card
  - Mail payments
  - Pay in person
- 

## CIRCUIT COURT

### Trial Division

414 Washington Ave., Room 300  
Grand Haven, MI 49417  
Phone: 616.846.8320  
Fax: 616.846.8179

### Friend of the Court

414 Washington Ave., Room 225  
Grand Haven, MI 49417  
Phone: 616.846.8210  
Fax: 616.846.8128

### Juvenile Services Division

12120 Fillmore Street  
West Olive, MI 49460  
Phone: 616.786.4100  
Fax: 616.786.4154

### Holland Satellite Office

12185 James St., Suite 170  
Holland, MI 49424

## PROBATE COURT

12120 Fillmore Street  
West Olive, MI 49460  
Phone: 616.786.4110  
Fax: 616.738.4624

## Staff Facts

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### *20th Judicial Circuit Court*

4 Circuit Court Judges  
116 Full Time Staff  
3 Part Time Staff  
18 Temporary Staff  
4.5 Ottawa County Sheriff Deputies  
10 Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

**155.5 Total**

### *Ottawa County Probate Court*

1 Probate Court Judge  
5 Full Time Staff

**6 Total**