

FAMILY COURT

| Caseload Comparison - Fiscal Years 2023-2024 - Total Case Filings | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| | 2023 | 2024 | Change | % Change |
| New Castle County | 21,256 | 22,532 | 1,276 | 6.0% |
| Kent County | 8,621 | 8,760 | 139 | 1.6% |
| Sussex County | 9,092 | 9,540 | 448 | 4.9% |
| State | 38,969 | 40,832 | 1,863 | 4.8% |

| Caseload Comparison - Fiscal Years 2023-2024- Total Case Dispositions | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| | 2023 | 2024 | Change | % Change |
| New Castle County | 21,436 | 23,901 | 2,465 | 11.5% |
| Kent County | 8,406 | 9,517 | 1,111 | 13.2% |
| Sussex County | 9,437 | 9,363 | -74 | -0.8% |
| State | 39,279 | 42,781 | 3,502 | 8.9% |

Notes:

* A civil filing is defined as one petition, or one single civil incident filed with the Family Court. In a divorce matter, although the petition may contain multiple ancillary matters to the divorce, it is counted as only one filing.

- A civil filing categorized as a "Case with Ancillary" is defined as a divorce with at least one ancillary, although the petition may contain multiple ancillary matters to the divorce, it is counted as only one filing. These were first counted in SFY2023. Ancillaries have always been a filing type; however, these were not included in prior years' filing counts.
- For example, if a divorce is filed with a property division ancillary and a temporary alimony ancillary, it is counted once under the "Divorce" category and once under the "Cases with Ancillary" category.
- Beginning in January 2024, some civil cases that originated in Kent and Sussex Counties were being handled by New Castle Judges as part of an effort to equitably distribute cases across all of Family Court's Judges.
- A criminal or delinquency filing is defined as one incident filed against one individual or defendant. A single criminal or juvenile delinquency filing may be comprised of a single or multiple charges relating to a single incident.
- During the course of reviewing the SFY2024 report, it was discovered that Juvenile Truancy, Juvenile Civil Citations, and Juvenile Violations were not consistently being counted when these statutes represent the first charge sequence. Family Court worked with the Judicial Information Center to correct these incongruities for the SFY2024 report and moving forward. As part of this correction, it was decided that Adult Truancy would be broken out from the 'All Other Charges' section to remain consistent with the Juvenile section
- Mediation is the process prior to adjudication in which a trained mediator attempts to assist the parties in reaching an agreement. If the parties are unable to reach an agreement or the mediation does not occur as scheduled, the matter is scheduled to be heard before a Commissioner or Judge or rescheduled back to a mediation calendar.
- Custody, support, visitation, determination of parentage, guardianship, imperiling family relations, and rule to show cause filings are scheduled for mediation unless bypass mediation rules apply as indicated in 13 Del. C. §711A and 13 Del. C. §728A; Family Court Procedures OCI-914 and OCI-902.
- Automatic Expungements/Pardons resulting in Automatic Juvenile Expungements are counted as filings in this report due to the amount of staff effort to process them. Although there is not a disposition from a Hearing Officer for Automatic Expungements, the directive letter from SBI is acted upon by our staff. Therefore, the resolution of these types of filings are added to the same month they are received in the Disposition sections of this report.
- Due to expungements, Delinquency and Criminal Filing/Disposition stats were taken from reports ran each month throughout the year. While this method will not catch all filing and dispositions that may have been expunged, this is the method that will allow us to capture the most. The volume of expungements will affect all data regarding juvenile criminal charges. Any decreases from prior FYs should not be assumed to be actual decreases as we don't have a definitive way to measure the impact of all the charges immediately expunged.
- FY 2020 through FY 2024 Stats were most likely impacted by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and changes from past or future years should consider this impact.

Source: Court Administrator, Family Court; Administrative Office of the Courts.