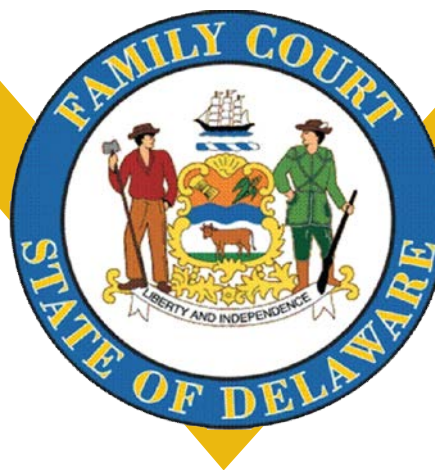




The **Family Court** has extensive jurisdiction over virtually all family and juvenile matters. All civil appeals, including those relating to juvenile delinquency, go directly to the Supreme Court while adult criminal cases are appealed to the Superior Court. The Constitution of Delaware, Article IV, Section 1, establishes the Family Court.



# Family Court

## Chief Judge Michael K. Newell

### ***By the Numbers***

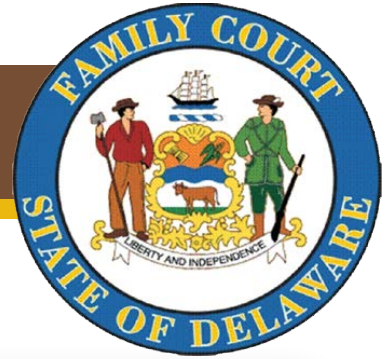


#### **FAMILY COURT**

- Judges - 17
- Commissioners - 16
- Court Staff - 307

TOTAL: 340

# FAMILY COURT



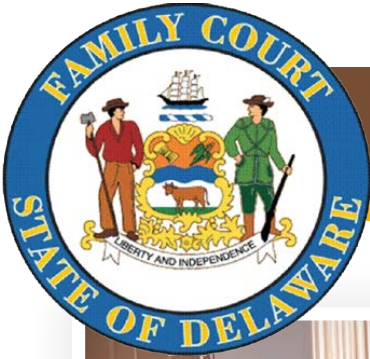
## Family Court Judges

### **Seated, Front Row (seated left to right):**

Judge Arlene Minus Coppadge • Judge Mardi F. Pyott • Judge Louann Vari •  
Judge James G. McGiffin, Jr. • Judge Mary S. Much • Judge Janell S. Ostroski •  
Judge Felice G. Kerr

### **Standing, Back Row (left to right):**

Judge Paula T. Ryan • Judge Jennifer B. Ranji • Judge Peter B. Jones • Judge Theresa M. Hayes •  
Chief Judge Michael K. Newell • Judge Joelle P. Hitch • Judge Michael W. Arrington •  
Judge Natalie J. Haskins • Judge Mark D. Buckworth • Judge Eliza M. Hirst



# FAMILY COURT



## Family Court Commissioners

### **Seated, Front Row (left to right):**

Commissioner Theresa A. Sedivec • Commissioner Sonja Truitt Wilson •  
Commissioner Para K. Wolcott • Commissioner Kim DeBonte •  
Commissioner Loretta Young • Commissioner Emily A. Farley

### **Standing, Back Row (left to right):**

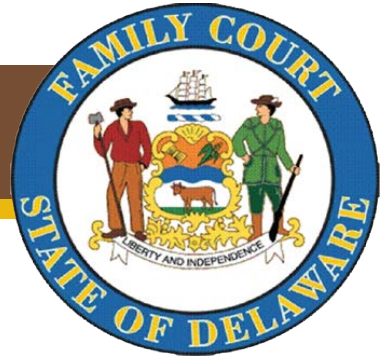
Commissioner Jennifer L. Mayo • Commissioner James J. Maxwell •  
Commissioner Danielle S. Blount • Commissioner Andrew K. Southmayd •  
Chief Judge Michael K. Newell • Commissioner Francis E. Mieczkowski, III •  
Commissioner M. DeSales Haley • Commissioner Jessica B. Markowski-Kelly •  
Commissioner Gretchen C. Gilchrist

### **Not Pictured:**

Commissioner Craig R. Fitzgerald • Commissioner Candace E. Holmes



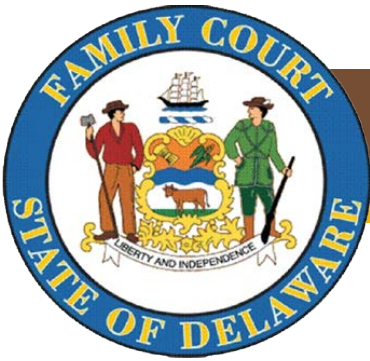
# FAMILY COURT



## Family Court

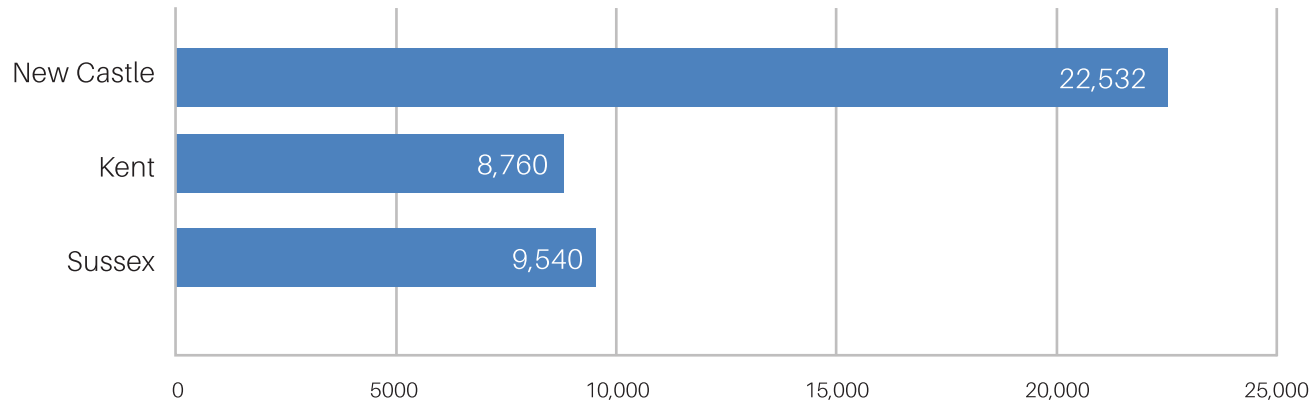
# 2024 Highlights

- Family Court welcomed new Judge, Eliza Hirst, who took the bench after longtime Judge, Robert Coonin, retired.
- Family Court also welcomed two new Commissioners, Jessica Markowski-Kelly in New Castle County and Candace Holmes in Kent County.
- Work continued on modernizing internal security policies and procedures to improve safety.
- Updates were made to the process of issuing writs as well as e-delivery of petitions to respondents who appear remotely in protection from abuse (PFA) cases.
- The court expanded the use of Special Process Servers, to provide a more speedy resolution to a case for petitioners who choose this option.
- New Castle County created a child waiting area in the Family Court Resource Center. This space provides child-friendly amenities while parents complete forms or conduct other business in the Resource Center or intake areas. As a part of this effort, the Wilmington Library donated books for the "Kids Corner".
- The court focused on improving supervisory training, with several employees graduating or actively participating in the Judicial Branch Supervisor Series Certificate Program.
- The court continued to work on recruitment. This produced an unprecedented number of new staff and supervisors joining the court, which has allowed the court to improve processing times for civil cases.
- The court partnered with the Department of Justice and Office of Defense Services to hold "blitz" calendars to successfully address a backlog of arraignments and support arrears cases
- The court implemented a compliance calendar for PFA cases and continues to work on improving the completion rate for parties who have been ordered to Domestic Violence Treatment.
- The court continues to work with construction teams on completion of, and transition to, the new Family Court courthouses for Kent and Sussex Counties.

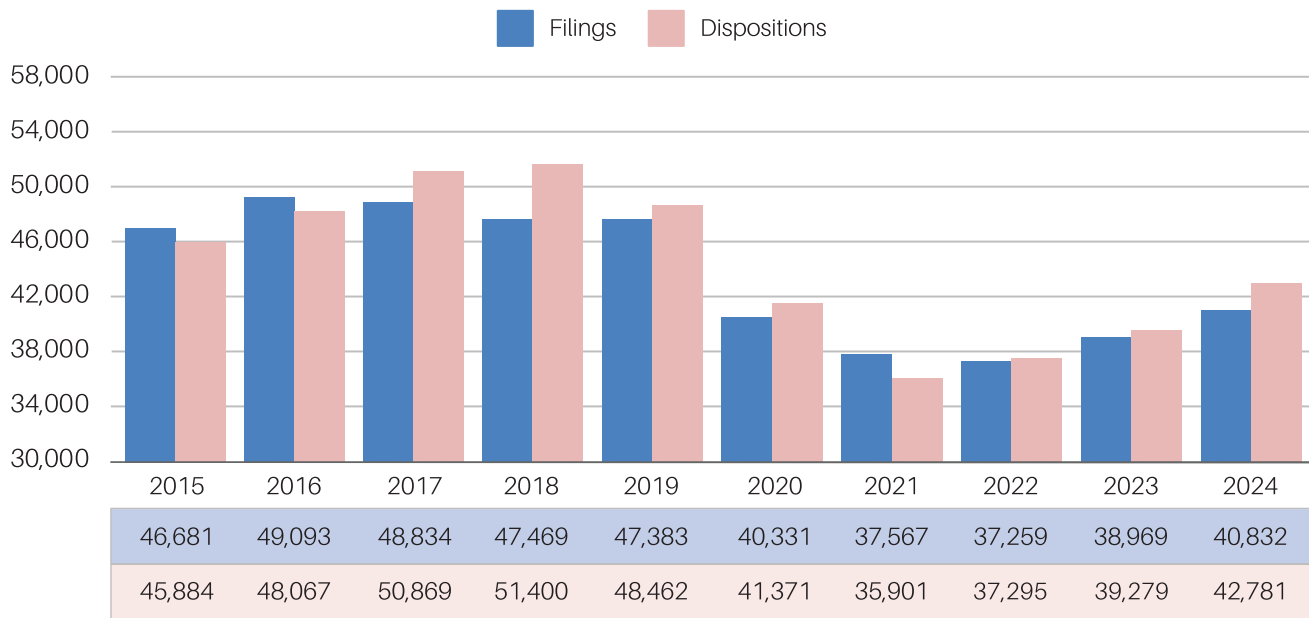


# FAMILY COURT

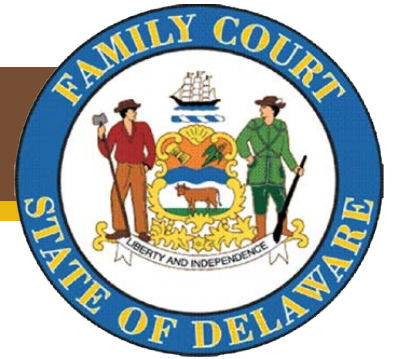
Family Court Filings by County Fiscal Year 2024



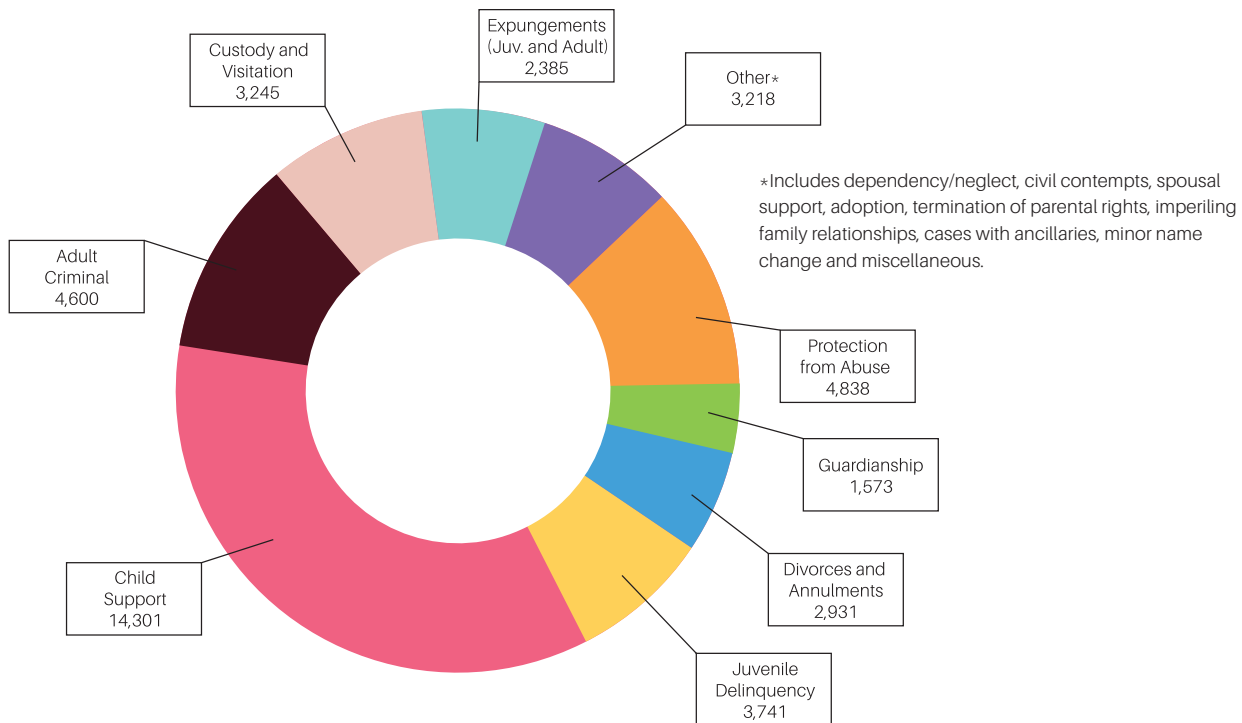
Family Court Civil and Criminal Filings and Dispositions by Fiscal Year



# FAMILY COURT



## Number of Family Court Filings by Type Fiscal Year 2024



Family Court Chief Judge Michael Newell (left) and Family Court Judge James McGiffin (right) participated in the Delaware Judiciary's annual reenactment of the courtroom scene from *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street* for elementary school students at courthouses across the state. This year marked the 20<sup>th</sup> year for the performance that has entertained more than 30,000 students in grades 3, 4 and 5.