

KANSAS JUDICIAL BRANCH FAST FACTS

November 2016

Public Safety

Courts are responsible for more than the occasional high-profile case that attracts public attention. Most of the 385,166 cases processed in Kansas courts in FY 2016 involved everyday issues and problems that impact the lives and communities of ordinary Kansans.

The most vulnerable in our communities—abused and neglected children, battered women, and victims of vandalism and theft—are impacted the most.



On average, every year Kansas state courts:

- * protect **6,852 children** who are in need of care by ruling on requests related to their safety and well-being
- * protect **13,715 people** by issuing restraining orders
- * dispose of **20,297 felony** cases and **14,232 misdemeanor** cases
- * supervise nearly **17,000 convicted criminals** on probation

Judicial Branch budget cuts would compromise safety and access to justice, and would freeze technology improvements and accelerate loss of personnel.

For example:

- * 3,000 convicted sex offenders on probation would not be supervised during court closures
- * Emergency orders in child in need of care cases would be delayed
- * Emergency hearings in domestic matters would be delayed

Judicial Branch Facts

- ❖ The Kansas Judicial Branch consists of approximately 250 judges and justices and 1,600 employees who pay mortgages and taxes and who purchase goods and services.
- ❖ The Kansas Judicial Branch was recently ranked as the 19th most business friendly court system in the nation by the U.S. Chamber (of Commerce) Institute for Legal Reform. This is a drop from 5th in 2012. This drop may be connected to judge and staff turnover caused by salaries that are below market.



- ❖ The 2015 Legislature transferred oversight of the contracts for collecting restitution and debts owed to courts from the Attorney General's office to the Judicial Administrator. The Judicial Administrator is now creating and implementing debt collection standards and benchmarks for effective oversight of debt collection contracts.

Efficiencies Implemented by the Judicial Branch

In recent years the Judicial Branch has implemented several processes that are making more efficient use of our resources.

- ❖ **Electronic Filing**—Electronic filing (efiling) implementation statewide has resulted in streamlined procedures and efficient operations. All courts have eFiling capabilities and the appellate courts and 66 district courts have mandatory eFiling.
- ❖ **Position Inventory Analyses**—Personnel savings have been achieved through the use of weighted caseload and position inventory analyses.
- ❖ **Videoconferencing**—Use of videoconferencing by both district and appellate courts has reduced costs associated with travel and has protected the public in some cases, as inmates remain in a secure environment while exercising their right to a hearing.



The Judicial Branch continues to strive for even greater efficiencies through several ongoing projects.

- ❖ **Electronic Courts**—We continue to develop and implement a statewide, centralized electronic court environment (eCourt). Use of eCourt technology will make access to courts easier and improve court efficiency.



- ❖ **Website Redesign**—In conjunction with eCourt, we need a new website to allow Kansans to more easily access the many services the Judicial Branch provides. With the help of a grant received from the State Justice Institute, research has been completed and a request for proposal will be created to request bids from website developers.

Judicial Branch Programs

- ◆ **Child Welfare Permanency Planning:** Citizen Review Boards (CRBs) and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs throughout Kansas are developed and monitored by the Office of Judicial Administration (OJA). Their purpose is to ensure that children do not remain unnecessarily in foster care and promote a permanent and safe home for each child.
- ◆ **Child Support Enforcement:** The Judicial Branch participates in a cooperative reimbursement agreement with the Department of Children and Families for expediting child support enforcement case processing. Also, OJA is responsible for administering the Kansas Child Support Guidelines.
- ◆ **Electronic Transmission of DUI and Criminal Dispositions:** The Judicial Branch electronically transmits DUI and other criminal dispositions to the KBI. This has improved the timeliness and accuracy of reporting criminal histories.
- ◆ **Electronic Traffic Citation System:** The Judicial Branch partnered with the Kansas Highway Patrol to develop an electronic traffic citation system. District courts now retrieve Notices to Appear via a secure web portal.
- ◆ **Specialty Courts:** Problem-solving courts, such as veterans courts, drug courts, and truancy courts, continue to expand in Kansas judicial districts. A Specialty Courts Standards Committee has reviewed these courts and made recommendations for statewide operating standards.
- ◆ **Language Access:** The Judicial Branch is continuing to develop and administer Kansas' emerging comprehensive language access program to make courts more accessible to persons with limited English proficiency.
- ◆ **Municipal Court Support:** Training and an examination are given to nonlawyer municipal judges to ensure they possess the skills and knowledge necessary for the position. Also, annual training programs are provided to all municipal judges.

