

SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA
2023 ANNUAL REPORT
of the Judicial Council of the Supreme Court

THE SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA



From left: Justice Jay B. McCallum, Justice James T. Genovese, Justice Jefferson Hughes, Chief Justice John L. Weimer, Justice Scott J. Crichton, Justice William J. Crain, Justice Piper D. Griffin.

CHIEF JUSTICE JOHN L. WEIMER

Sixth Supreme Court District
Assumption, Iberia, Jefferson,
Lafourche, Plaquemines, St. Bernard,
St. Charles, St. James, St. John the
Baptist, St. Martin, St. Mary, and
Terrebonne Parishes.*

JUSTICE WILLIAM J. CRAIN

First Supreme Court District
Jefferson, Orleans, St. Helena,
St. Tammany, Tangipahoa,
and Washington Parishes.*

JUSTICE SCOTT J. CRICHTON

Second Supreme Court District
Allen, Beauregard, Bossier, Caddo,
DeSoto, Evangeline, Natchitoches,
Red River, Sabine, Vernon, and
Webster Parishes.*

JUSTICE JAMES T. GENOVESE

Third Supreme Court District
Acadia, Avoyelles, Calcasieu,
Cameron, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette,
St. Landry, and Vermilion Parishes.*

JUSTICE JAY B. MCCALLUM

Fourth Supreme Court District
Bienville, Caldwell, Catahoula,
Claiborne, Concordia, East Carroll,
Franklin, Grant, Jackson, LaSalle,
Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse,
Ouachita, Rapides, Richland, Tensas,
Union, West Carroll, and Winn
Parishes.*

JUSTICE JEFFERSON HUGHES

Fifth Supreme Court District
Ascension, East Baton Rouge,
East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston,
Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge,
and West Feliciana Parishes.*

JUSTICE PIPER D. GRIFFIN

Seventh Supreme Court District
Jefferson and Orleans Parishes.*

* See Court District Maps on pages 18-19.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Supreme Court Annual Report is a useful guide to judicial personnel and contacts throughout the state, as well as an overview of the Court's progress in 2023 and includes maps of electoral districts for the Supreme Court, the Courts of Appeal, and District Courts.

ON THE COVER:

A detailed image of the stained glass skylight in the courtroom of the Louisiana Supreme Court in New Orleans.

RESOURCES ON THE WEB AT WWW.LASC.ORG

The **STATISTICAL DATA** section summarizes two-year activity trends in juvenile, civil, criminal and traffic categories for courts at all levels in the state.

The **2023 LOUISIANA SUPREME COURT ANNUAL REPORT** and the **GUIDE TO LOUISIANA COURTS** featuring a list of judges, clerks and administrators (complete with contact phone numbers) for the Courts of Appeal, District Courts, and City and Parish Courts statewide are now available on the Louisiana Supreme Court website at www.lasc.org/PressRoom.

2023: CHOOSING A PATH TOWARD INNOVATION

I am pleased to present to you the 2023 Annual Report of the Judicial Council of the Supreme Court of Louisiana. This report demonstrates the hard work and dedication of the Louisiana state judiciary including our judges, court administrators, clerks of court, court staff, and everyone who contributes to the daily operations of the judicial branch of government.

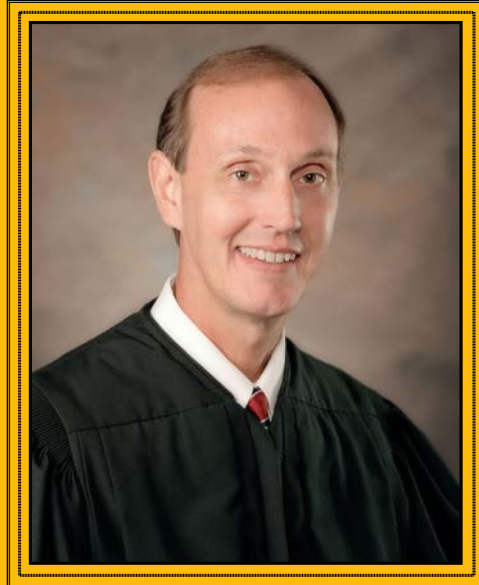
On behalf of myself, and with gratitude to my learned and respected colleagues, Justices Griffin, McCallum, Crain, Genovese, Crichton, and Hughes, (in reverse order of their seniority), I submit this report.

In my last Annual Report message, I spent considerable space describing the Judicial Structure Task Force. Created by HR 30 (2022 Reg. Session), the Task Force was directed “to determine the changes necessary to the existing structure of the judiciary and the most efficient use of judicial resources.” This direction was given because the most recent federal census revealed “population and demographic changes in the state of Louisiana” which “provide a reassessment opportunity to determine if reallocation of judicial resources may be needed.” Population data alone would not reveal how judicial resources should be allocated across the state, but rather, the Task Force was instructed to “consider the case filing data, case weights, court structure and finance, and the use of support personnel in [its] study.”

Those were the technical directions in HR 30, but they boiled down to two practical questions: 1) Are there enough judges and related resources in the places that need them? 2) Are there currently too many judges and related resources in some places? If the answer to either or both questions is “no,” then the Task Force was directed to suggest to the Legislature how to improve the situation.

The Task Force issued its final report on December 14, 2023. The report concludes with these two sentences: “To date, all caseload study activities for both the Courts of Appeal and the District Courts have been ceased. Due to this, the Judicial Structure Task Force is unable to submit a Report with any Findings and Recommendations relative to current judicial structure.”

Why were the caseload studies arranged by the Task Force not completed by the courts of appeal and by the district courts? More than enough ink has been spilled in the news media about this, and the Task Force created by HR 30 has concluded its efforts to engage those courts in completing the studies. So, at this juncture, I believe it more helpful to turn to another question: Should we remain satisfied with the current alignment of judicial resources (i.e., judges and provision



of related services) to the various needs around our state? The number of the district court positions and the court of appeal judges have remained unchanged for many decades. The responsibilities of the courts of appeal have been largely unchanged since the dawn of the internet. Given the population shifts described in the census, and the increasing complexity of life in a digital-fueled world, no one can reasonably conclude that the allocation of resources that was tailored to life long ago is still the best for serving our citizens today. Thus, I remain committed to examining this issue, and intend to have more to relay in the next Annual Report. If we, as a judiciary in this modern world are not innovating,

we consign ourselves to stagnating.

It is not without cause that I believe our judiciary will choose the path of innovation rather than stagnation. We clearly have innovators within our ranks.

For example, and in recognition at a national level of his forward-thinking leadership, Chief Judge John Michael Guidry of the First Circuit Court of Appeal was recently installed as President of the Council of Chief Judges of the State Courts of Appeal. Also at the national level, my esteemed colleague Justice Piper Griffin received the American Judges Association President’s Award in recognition of her service on that organization’s Board of Governors. Not surprisingly, Justice Griffin was elected secretary of the American Judges’ Association for the 2023-2024 year. And in recognition of a judicial career focused upon the rights of victims of crime, another of my esteemed colleagues, Justice Will Crain, was named as the Crimefighters, Inc. Judge of the Year.

The work of the judiciary is not shouldered by judges alone. I know that I speak on behalf of all my Supreme Court colleagues in stating that we, as a Court, are fortunate for our staff. Their dedication is apparent throughout the wide range of activities they perform on a daily basis. The judicial opinions of this Court are a significant and important part of this Court’s work, but those opinions would not be possible without the clerical, security, and logistic support of our staff. What you will read in the further pages of this report is a glimpse behind the scenes of an exceedingly active, vibrant, and yes, an innovative judiciary. For every judicial opinion from this Court on a

juvenile justice case, there are scores of other cases that are not filed, because of the CASA and FINS programs administered by this Court that are geared toward eliminating truancy, a predictor of juvenile crime. Likewise, for every tragic narrative of domestic violence that necessity has foisted on this Court to tell in a written opinion, there are scores of cases that are not filed because of interventions made possible by this Court's LPOR program.

If you are not familiar with these acronyms (CASA, FINS, and LPOR), it is so much the better that you will be more fully introduced to those and to several other acronyms in the pages that follow. In the short space available here for my introduction to this report, I can do little justice to further explain the depth of their work. What I can emphasize, however, is a common thread—while preventative and protective programs of this sort are common across the United States, the programs here in Louisiana are all the more impressive considering that the Louisiana Supreme Court is one of the few supreme courts in the nation that administers all of these programs under one roof. These programs not only benefit those with substance abuse issues, abused and neglected children, families, and those threatened with domestic violence, but these programs also save the taxpayers' money in the area of corrections and public health.

In the pages that follow, you will read more about the services that the Louisiana Supreme Court delivers across our state. The innovation and efficiencies of which I just spoke are made possible through the collection of data, which you will also see illustrated in considerable detail. Considering our staff's attention to detail in data collection, it is not surprising that in 2023, the Court Case Management Information Systems

(CMIS) Division, which is responsible for reporting certain information into the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), was recognized as a national leader in reporting that data.

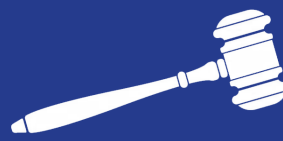
In closing, I must emphasize that data itself is not the innovation that will drive the judiciary to better serve and to better represent the changing population of our state. Data is important, but it is only a tool. On a daily basis, I see our judges and our staff members use that tool as part of their larger thought processes, which are rooted in justice and a spirit of service. The opportunities to collaborate with our like-minded colleagues in the Legislative and Executive branches are always embraced when we have mutual interests. In the Judicial branch, we stand ready to seize those opportunities to work with other public officials, and with the public who has placed us all in positions across government in the sincere hope that we will not stagnate, but will collectively innovate in serving society and our system of justice.

The materials that you have available in this report reflect the dedicated service that judges and judicial employees rendered to Louisiana in 2022. I am immensely proud of the accomplishments reflected herein, and yet humbled to daily work alongside the creative and committed people responsible for these endeavors.



John L. Weimer
Chief Justice
Louisiana Supreme Court

JUDGES
in the **CLASSROOM**



STUDENTS
in the
COURTROOM

The **Judges in the Classroom/Students in the Courtroom Program** is a unique educational partnership between the Louisiana Supreme Court and various stakeholders, such as the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education, the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education, and the Louisiana District Judges Association, aimed at bolstering civics education among our state's students and assisting teachers in educating students on the workings of our government and judicial system by those engaged in that very system daily.

Judges participating in the "Judges in the Classroom/Students in the Courtroom" outreach initiative cover subject matter on a wide variety of topics in the area of civics and law related instruction, and guide their presentations as appropriate for elementary, middle, and high school levels. The Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education works closely between judges and schools to arrange these opportunities for enhanced civics education.

Additionally, Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Scott J. Crichton developed a program titled, "Crime, Consequences, and the Power of Choice," which educates young people about criminal law and more significantly, the real-life consequences of violating the law. He has prepared this dynamic, in-depth presentation using examples of everyday life situations that can be derailed by bad choices.



THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA

The *Judicial Council of the Supreme Court of Louisiana* serves as the research arm of the Louisiana Supreme Court. As a body, it studies ways to improve judicial procedures, increase efficiencies, and correct procedural shortcomings. Most of the work is done through standing committees or *ad hoc* committees.

In response to legislation from the 2023 Regular Legislative Session, Supreme Court staff is establishing a procedure to equitably disburse monies allocated in the Court Modernization and Technology Fund. The Fund's stated purpose is to provide funding for technology upgrades in courts under the supervisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

The **Standing Committee to Evaluate the Need for New Judgeships** examines requests for new judgeships against set criteria. If the established threshold is met, members of the Committee conduct a site visit to the requesting jurisdiction prior to making a recommendation to the Judicial Council. A request for a new judgeship must be received by the Judicial Administrator's Office by October 1st of each year. Two requests for new judgeships were submitted for consideration in 2023. Review of data accompanying these requests will be completed in early 2024. After a vote of Judicial Council members, a recommendation will be made to the Legislature.

The **Standing Committee to Evaluate Requests for new Court Costs and Fees** reviews applications for new or increased court costs and makes recommendations to the Judicial Council. The Judicial Administrator's Office must receive such a request by October 15 of the year prior to the planned legislative introduction. Prior to the 2023 Legislative Session, the Council considered three (3) requests to increase filing fees: East Baton Rouge Family Court; Ruston City Marshal; and Hammond City Court. The Committee recommended favorable passage of the increased fees. Pending review prior to the 2024 Legislative Session are five (5) court cost applications. The review process will be completed in early 2024.

The Judicial Council traditionally meets bi-annually. All meetings are open to the public and held at the Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr. Courthouse in New Orleans.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Honorable John L. Weimer, Chair
Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Louisiana
Honorable Piper D. Griffin
Justice, Supreme Court of Louisiana
Honorable Jeffrey L. Robinson
representing Conference of Court of Appeal Judges
Honorable Shannon J. Gremillion
representing Conference of Court of Appeal Judges
Honorable Scott Schlegel
representing Louisiana District Judges Association
Honorable Ramona Emanuel
representing Louisiana District Judges Association
Honorable Kelli Terrell Temple
representing Louisiana City Judges Association
Honorable Pamela Baker
representing Louisiana Council of Juvenile
and Family Court Judges

Stephen I. Dwyer, Esq.
representing Louisiana State Bar Association
Collin Melancon, Esq.
representing Young Lawyers Section of the LSBA
Honorable Guy Holdridge
representing Louisiana State Law Institute
Honorable Franklin J. Foil
State Senator
Honorable Nicholas J. Muscarello, Jr.
State Representative
Honorable Perry M. Nicosia
representing Louisiana District Attorneys Assn.
Meghan M. Garvey
appointed by the Louisiana Public Defender Board
Honorable Laurie Hulin
representing Louisiana State Bar Association,
appointed by the Louisiana Supreme Court
Honorable Melissa R. Henry
representing Louisiana Clerks of Court Assn.
Dr. Sarah Moody-Thomas
Citizen Representative, appointed by the Louisiana Supreme
Court

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Justice Jefferson Hughes
Justice Scott J. Crichton
Justice James T. Genovese
Justice William J. Crain
Justice Jay B. McCallum
Justices, Supreme Court of Louisiana

STAFF OF JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Sandra A. Vujnovich, JD
Judicial Administrator
Supreme Court of Louisiana
Jennifer Eagan, JD
Deputy Judicial Administrator, Research & Development/
Judicial Council
Supreme Court of Louisiana

2023: A YEAR IN REVIEW

This section highlights the initiatives of the Judicial Administrator’s Office, the managerial arm of the Louisiana Supreme Court which serves as the staffing and fiscal agent for the Judicial Council and court-appointed task forces and committees. Program divisions of the Judicial Administrator’s Office include: Children and Families, Drug and Specialty Courts, the Louisiana Protective Order Registry, Office of Language Access, and Community Relations.

This section also features an update on the work of the Law Library, Judicial College, Committee on Bar Admissions, Clerk of Court’s Office, Court Case Management Information Systems Division, Attorney Disciplinary Board and the Judiciary Commission of Louisiana.

OFFICE OF THE JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATOR



Sandra A. Vujnovich, JD
Judicial Administrator



Brian Wiggins, JD
Chief Deputy Judicial Administrator



Storm Ehlers, JD
Children and Families



Michelle Beaty, JD
Office of Special Counsel



Robert Gunn
Community Relations



Kelly Blackwell, JD
Judiciary Commission Counsel



Ramona Harris
Louisiana Protective Order Registry (LPOR)



Johanna Braud
Supreme Court Drug and Specialty Court Office



Caitlin Morgenstern, JD
Office of Court Access



Veronica Cheneau, PHR, CHRE
Human Resources



Darryl M. Schultz
Legislative Liaison



Russell Cortazzo, Jr., JD
Case Management Information Systems



David Becker, JD
*General Counsel
Legal Department*



Jennifer Eagan, JD
*Research and Development/
Judicial Council*



Bryan Wolff, CPA, MBA
*Chief Financial Officer/
Accounting Services/Budget*

LPOR

LOUISIANA PROTECTIVE ORDER REGISTRY

In 1997, legislation was passed which created the Louisiana Protective Order Registry (LPOR) and named the Judicial Administrator’s Office of the Louisiana Supreme Court as the entity responsible for the development and maintenance of this database. The registry is a statewide repository for court orders issued to prevent harassing, threatening or violent acts against a spouse, intimate cohabitant, dating partner, family, or household member.

LPOR staff provide live training seminars to explain how the registry works, highlight relevant state and federal laws, and disseminate standardized protective order forms and interactive software.

These seminars are designed for, but are not limited to, judges, magistrates, commissioners, hearing officers, judicial administrators, clerks of court, other court personnel, victim assistance providers, victim advocates, legal services providers, and attorneys.

Due to participant feedback which indicated a preference for online trainings, LPOR has continued to conduct the LPOR Legal Seminar as a live webinar. Six (6) webinars were conducted that reached 372 individuals in 2023.

In 2023, LPOR entered 31,683 orders from courts across the state. Of those, 18,950 (60%) were civil orders and 12,733 (40%) were criminal orders. Since its inception through the close of 2023, more than 575,000 orders have been entered into the registry.

Certain qualifying records from LPOR are transmitted to the FBI’s National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). At year’s end, 416,292 Louisiana orders had been transmitted to NCIC since the start of the program. This includes 20,123 qualifying orders transmitted during 2023. Also during 2023, LPOR’s on-call team responded to 181 requests for order verification submitted by examiners with NICS. This federal program is designed to prevent the sale of firearms, ammunition, and explosives to those who are prohibited, including individuals who are the subject of a qualifying domestic violence order.

Additionally during 2023, LPOR responded to a total of 2,271 calls from local, state, other state, and federal law enforcement with requests for verification of orders of protection.

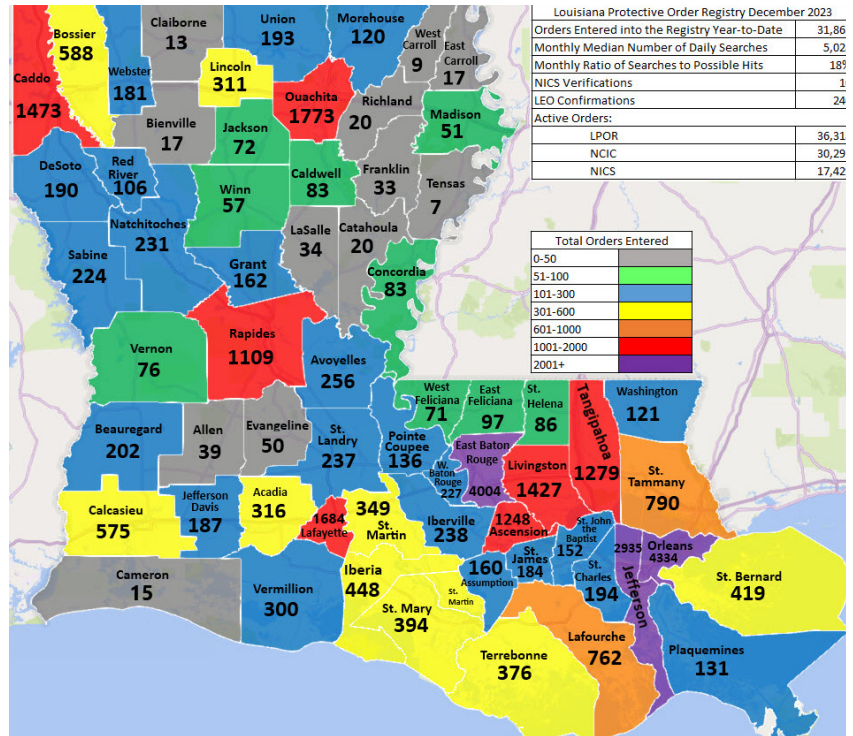


Table One: Civil Orders	1997-2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total (1997-2023)
Temporary Restraining Order	247,149	13,444	14,084	15,110	15,060	304,847
Protective Order	76,648	3,152	3,474	3,728	3,848	90,850
Preliminary Injunction	1,299	42	16	8	12	1,377
Permanent Injunction	1,916	41	53	29	30	2,069
Total Civil Orders	327,012	16,679	17,627	18,875	18,950	399,143

Table Two: Criminal Orders	1997-2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total (1997-2023)
Bail Restriction	88,473	8,738	11,008	10,756	10,812	129,787
Peace Bond	19,070	0	2	0	0	19,072
Combined Bail/Peace Bond	9,464	1	2	190	278	9,935
Sentencing Order	0	0	0	0	0	0
Probation Conditions	0	0	1	1	1	3
Combined Sentencing/Probation	12,705	769	1,231	1,644	1,642	17,991
Total Criminal Orders	129,712	9,508	12,244	12,591	12,733	176,788

Table Three: Totals by Year	1997-2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total (1997-2023)
Total Civil and Criminal Orders	456,724	26,187	29,871	31,466	31,683	575,931

DRUG AND SPECIALTY COURTS

LOUISIANA SUPREME COURT DRUG AND SPECIALTY COURT OFFICE

In 2018, the Supreme Court Drug Court Office transitioned to the *Supreme Court Drug and Specialty Court Office (SCDSCO)*, with the aim of providing additional opportunities and ongoing support to all Louisiana specialty court judges and their staff. This has facilitated and promoted the growth of these programs, which are proven alternatives to traditional criminal justice interventions. Currently there are 69 operational Louisiana specialty courts, of which 38 are adult and juvenile drug courts. Other Louisiana specialty courts include Reentry Courts, Veterans Treatment Courts, Family Preservation/Treatment Courts, Co-occurring/Behavioral Health Courts and Sobriety/ DWI Courts. Each specialty court program is comprised of a team, which is led by a judge, and generally includes a coordinator, treatment staff, prosecutor, public defender, law enforcement representatives, case manager, and/or other stakeholders. Specialty court teams use a non-adversarial approach to ensure that participants receive the highest level of care possible. Teams also work together to ensure program operations adhere to all applicable standards and policies. As an effective alternative to incarceration, Louisiana specialty courts are demanding programs that require frequent and random drug testing, intensive treatment, judicial oversight, and community supervision and support to assure the best possible outcomes for offenders with substance abuse disorder. Funds for Louisiana’s specialty courts are appropriated by the Louisiana Legislature and administered by the Supreme Court Drug and Specialty Court Office. The SCDSCO awards funds annually to programs statewide. Additionally, the SCDSCO closely monitors each program both fiscally and programmatically throughout the year.

2023 DRUG AND SPECIALTY COURT PARTICIPANTS

	Adult Drug Courts	Juvenile Drug Courts	Family Preservation Courts	Behavioral Health Courts	DWI Courts	Reentry Courts	Veterans Courts	Total All Courts
Individual Participants Served	3,399	297	482	290	257	194	96	5,015
Individuals Screened	1,928	238	627	505	115	64	75	3,552
New Participants Admitted	1,542	169	321	173	88	44	44	2,381
Treatment Hours Administered	234,228	4,730	14,440	3,136	18,690	962	2,102	278,287
Drug Tests Administered	131,158	4,180	9,067	8,604	3,900	4,894	2,757	164,560

2023 DRUG AND SPECIALTY COURT PROGRAM SUCCESSES

	Adult Drug Courts	Juvenile Drug Courts	Family Preservation Courts	Behavioral Health Courts	DWI Courts	Reentry Courts	Veterans Courts	Total All Courts
Total Drug Free Babies	46	5	18	0	0	0	0	69
Obtained Employment	786	63	97	0	0	36	8	990
Obtained Secure Housing	283	6	71	0	0	37	8	405
Community Service Hours	21,046	396	12,380	371	56	486	948	35,683

Recidivism 8% (92% of participants who graduated in 2020 had no new convictions.)

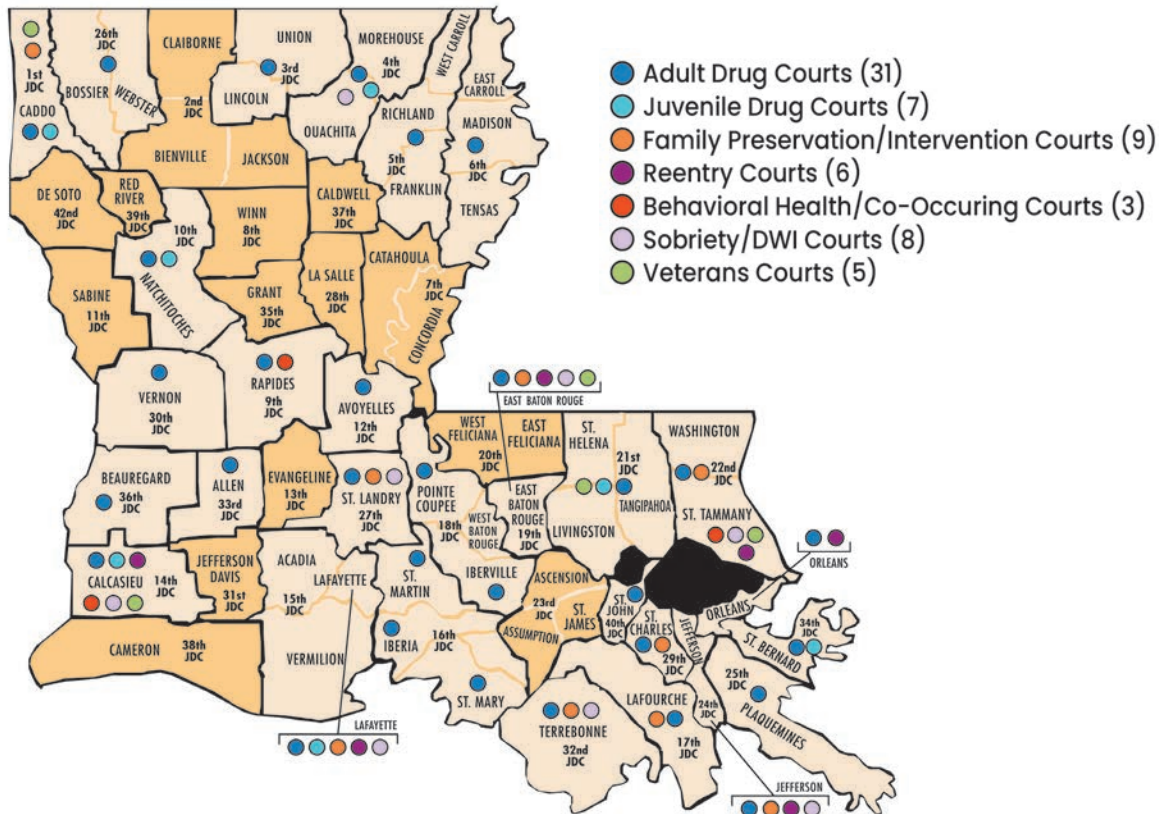
*The cost of care and treatment for each child born addicted to drugs is estimated to be approximately \$250,000 for the first year of life, Office of Justice Programs, 1997.

2023 DRUG AND SPECIALTY COURT GRADUATE SUCCESSES

	Adult Drug Courts	Juvenile Drug Courts	Family Preservation Courts	Behavioral Health Courts	DWI Courts	Reentry Courts	Veterans Courts	Total All Courts
Graduated/Satisfied Court Order	659	74	125	54	82	30	8	1,032
Average Months in Program	24	9	11	17	21	43	17	20

DRUG AND SPECIALTY COURTS

LOUISIANA SUPREME COURT DRUG AND SPECIALTY COURTS



OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS

OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS AND CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

This past year, the *Office of Language Access* expanded into the *Office of Court Access*, overseeing the Office of Language Access (OLA) and focusing on efforts to ensure that Louisiana's courts are open and accessible to all. In 2023, the OLA conducted two orientation sessions and one oral exam preparation and skills building workshop with 48 attendees. As a result, the OLA Court Interpreter Registry grew to 178 registered and 41 certified interpreters. This past year, there were many additions to the state's language access resources including:

- A joint effort by the Language Access Stakeholder Committee and the Louisiana Law Institute to study and propose modifications to Louisiana law relative to court interpreter qualifications to ensure interpreter quality;
- A joint effort by the OLA and LPOR to develop Louisiana Uniform Abuse Prevention Order dual language English/Spanish forms; and
- Education efforts on the new Louisiana Supreme Court rules, applicable to all courts, mandating the appointment of a qualified interpreter in court proceedings and the availability of language access resources in court programs (both at no cost to the LEP individual).

In 2019, the Supreme Court of Louisiana entered into an agreement with the United States Department of Justice, whereby the Supreme Court would oversee improved services for non-English speakers involved in criminal and civil litigation throughout the state. The Supreme Court and DOJ resolved the language access matter on or around January 19, 2023. The Supreme Court, however, remains engaged in improving access to the judicial system for everyone. Now that the final year of the Language Access Plan is complete, the Language Access Stakeholder Committee will draft a new Language Access Plan for the next three-year period.

For more information about Louisiana's language access resources, including signs, translated materials, and brochures, go to: www.lasc.org/languageaccess.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

DIVISION OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES

In 2023, the *Division of Children and Families* provided staff support on behalf of the Court for representation on the Louisiana Juvenile Detention Alternatives (JDAI) Statewide Leadership Collaborative, the Juvenile Justice Reform Act Implementation Commission, the Child Protection Representation Commission, the Louisiana Children's Justice Task Force, the LSBA Children's Law Committee, and the Law Institute's Children's Code Committee. The division provided judicial trainings at the Governor's Juvenile Justice Conference; Summer School for Judges; Spring and Fall Judges' Conferences; FINS Conference; City, Family, and Juvenile Judges Seminar; and at the Louisiana District Attorneys Association.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)



The *Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)* Assistance Program administers funding for CASA programs in 61 parishes and 41 judicial districts. The purpose of Court Appointed Special Advocates is to advocate for timely placement of children in permanent, safe, and stable homes. CASA Programs are appointed by a court to designate a volunteer for a child involved in certain proceedings before the court. CASA volunteers serve without compensation and at the pleasure of the court exercising juvenile jurisdiction. Volunteers have the special duty and responsibility to advocate for the best interests of the child to whom he or she is assigned throughout the pendency of judicial proceedings.

In 2023, CASA programs served 2,778 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) eligible children through the advocacy of 1,176 volunteer advocates. One thousand fifty closed cases resulted in the placement of 1,054 children in permanent homes; 99.6 percent of cases closed with children achieving permanency. CASA programs trained 341 new volunteer advocates.

Court Improvement Program (CIP)

The *Louisiana Court Improvement Program (CIP)* is coordinated by the Pelican Center for Children and Families under a subgrant agreement with the Louisiana Supreme Court. During 2023, the CIP provided legal and interdisciplinary resources and trainings designed to improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of abused and neglected children in our state. The CIP provided 148 training opportunities, allowing 762 professionals to receive training resulting in over 2,097.5 CLE hours earned by attorneys and judges. In 2023, the CIP was recognized as a model program in the nation by Prudence Beidler Carr, Center Director, American Bar Association (ABA) Center on Children and the Law. The CIP was also recognized by Casey Family Programs through a 2023 Casey Excellence for Children Award for its investment in the implementation of My Community Cares (MCC). For more information on all the recent CIP highlights, please visit the CIP page on the Louisiana Supreme Court's website: https://www.lasc.org/children_families.



Families in Need of Services (FINS)

The *Families in Need of Services Assistance Program (FINS-AP)* provides funding for informal FINS offices in 43 judicial districts, including Hammond City Court, Morgan City Court and Monroe City Court. The 18th JDC was added to the funding process for informal FINS after 15 years of not having a FINS Office. FINS intake officers statewide processed over 7,000 complaints and continue to provide programmatic support, implement intensive case management strategies, and service coordination that help to increase alternatives to formal processing.



FINS-AP continues to collaborate with state stakeholders and community-based services to assist Louisiana families and children. Highlights this year include the Opioid Conference and FINS Process workshop for FINS Officers and Judges in Ruston, Louisiana. FINS-AP continues collaborating with the Louisiana FINS Association on providing training on new, innovative ways to approach treatment and services, reforming the juvenile justice system, and creating alternatives to court for status offenders.

FINS-AP received a grant from the CDC that afforded the opportunity to sponsor a Fall Opioid Training in which the participants learned information on screening and assessment tools, how to identify risk factors for possible substance abuse. FINS Officers are now using the CAGE and CRAFFT screening tools to help identify substance users to prevent the chances of overdose. FINS Offices have been equipped with urine drug tests to detect the type of drugs used for proper service coordination. Additionally, FINS Officers received certifications in CPR-First Aid and AED, and training in Trust Based Relational Interventions (TBRI).

FINS Officers use a Case Management System to process and track informal cases through the courts. FINS-AP is upgrading to a new system that will better support the work of the courts and provide substantial data and reports to the state. FINS Officers continue to focus on strengthening families and helping our youth become positive citizens of the state of Louisiana.

LAW LIBRARY

LAW LIBRARY OF LOUISIANA

Located in the Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr. Courthouse in New Orleans, the *Law Library of Louisiana* provides valuable services and resources for the judiciary, the bar, and the public throughout the state and beyond. The Law Library, founded in 1838, contains over 150,000 physical volumes, in addition to a full array of online legal resources.



Miriam Childs
Director

Law librarians recorded 2,243 reference desk interactions in 2023. The Law Library co-sponsored with the Supreme Court of Louisiana Historical Society three CLE programs: “Breaking Barriers: A View From the Bench – Chronically a Life of Professionalism,” featuring retired Judge Freddie Pitcher, Jr.; “Fair Labor Lawyer: The Remarkable Life of New Deal Attorney and Supreme Court Advocate Bessie Margolin;” and the annual A.P. Tureaud American Inn of Court End-of-the-Year Ethics & Professionalism CLE program. The professionalism program covered the story of the Baton Rouge sit-ins of 1960, and was very well-received. The Law Library prepared a four-banner exhibit about the history of the Louisiana Supreme Court, which is on display on the first floor of the Louisiana Supreme Court building. The Law Library also prepared two display cases examining the 2023 Law Day theme, “Cornerstones of Democracy: Civics, Civility, Collaboration.”

The Law Library’s collection of books and other materials is continually updated. In 2023 the library added 585 new titles and 992 new volumes. Additionally, the Law Library responded to 120 prisoner mail requests. The staff of the Library continued to publish its newsletter, *De Novo*, as outreach to the judiciary, the bar, and the public to provide useful information on legal topics and library resources.



Law Library of Louisiana Director Miriam Childs displays a copy of the title page of the *Digesti Novi Textus (1518)* to the 2023 cohort of the Governor’s Fellows Program in Louisiana Government.

THE LAW LIBRARY OF LOUISIANA STAFF

Miriam Childs, MLIS Director, Law Library of Louisiana	Cynthia Jones, MA Librarian
Sara Pic, JD, MLIS Head of Public Services	Angela Reaux, MLIS Librarian
Tara Cunningham, MLIS Head of Collection Services	Sara Chauppette, MA Library Assistant
Francis Norton, JD, MLIS Research Lawyer/Librarian & Government Documents Coordinator	Sebastian Fernandez, BA Library Assistant
	Melissa Roane, BA Library Assistant

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The *Community Relations Division (CRD)* is the outreach division of the Louisiana Supreme Court that oversees public communications, meetings and events, courthouse tours, and other public involvement. The Community Relations Division manages the court website’s information and design (www.lasc.org), handles media relations, provides photographic and videographic support, and produces court publications such as the *Annual Report of the Judicial Council of the Louisiana Supreme Court* and the *Judges in the Classroom/Students in the Courtroom* newsletter. In all of these endeavors, the CRD aims to inform, educate, and further public understanding of and public trust and confidence in the Louisiana judiciary.

The CRD issued a combined 48 media and press releases in 2023, reaching over 15,400 recipients.

In 2023, the CRD assisted with media coverage for a number of events including the Judges in the Classroom/Students in the Courtroom educational initiative; Law Day, Constitution Day, and Black History Month outreach initiatives; and the 71st Annual Red Mass.

In 2023, CRD staff conducted 69 courthouse tours for 1,225 visitors, up from 47 courthouse tours for 753 visitors in 2022, and seven courthouse tours for 276 guests in 2021 and 13 courthouse tours for 250 court visitors in 2020 during the COVID pandemic. Tours of the Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr. Courthouse, which is home to the Louisiana Supreme Court, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal, Law Library of Louisiana, and the Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson Supreme Court Museum, are conducted for students and other interested visitors from across Louisiana, as well as from other states and countries. Guests in 2023 included visitors from across the U.S., as well as England, France, Italy, Mexico, Nigeria, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Denmark, Nepal, Romania, Germany, Austria, India, Korea, and Japan.



Louisiana Supreme Court Justices James Genovese and William Crain, and Chief Justice John Weimer spoke with students from Rummel High School and Metairie Park Country Day School following the schools’ tour of the Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr. Courthouse and viewing of oral arguments before the Court.

CMIS

COURT CASE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The *Court Case Management Information Systems* (CMIS) Division collects, analyzes, and disseminates information to external agencies regarding case filings, dispositions and sentencing information from Louisiana's district courts, city courts, and some mayor's courts. CMIS worked with courts and associated agencies throughout the state to provide training assistance, on-site visits, and grant opportunities to enhance the completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of data collected for criminal and traffic dispositions.

Criminal Records

The Criminal Records Project received 431,378 criminal records containing filing, disposition, and sentencing information in 2023. Of those records, 108,590 contained information that was shared with the Louisiana Department of Public Safety for inclusion in the Computerized Criminal History (CCH) database that is accessible to law enforcement, the courts, and criminal justice agencies to help enhance public safety. This is a decrease of -6.68 % from last year for records provided by the courts to CMIS with a decrease -5.05% in dispositions reported to the Computerized Criminal History (CCH) database.

The National Instant Check System (NICS) is hosted by the FBI and contains records on persons who are disqualified from receiving or purchasing firearms. The Supreme Court is required by LA R.S. 13:753 to provide qualifying records to NICS. From the records provided by Louisiana courts: 62,596 disposition records were posted to the NICS database, a decrease of -5.09% over last year. Of the records posted: 46,234 were felony convictions; 3,520 were misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence; 9,170 drug convictions; 91 were not guilty by reason of insanity; 1,369 were incompetent to stand trial; 1,793 were probation restrictions; 1,815 were court-ordered firearm prohibitions under C.Cr.P. Art. 320(B) and 915 civil judicial commitment orders. CMIS also provided 41,417 felony indictments to NICS in 2023. As of January 9, 2024, there were 899,056 active records at NICS submitted by the Louisiana Supreme Court on behalf of the State of Louisiana in compliance with LA R.S. 13:753. As of January 9, 2024, there were 30,541 criminal and civil protection orders from the Louisiana Protective Order Registry active in the National Crime Information Center and 17,644 were active in the NICS database.

The continued success in records posted and shared is attributable to continued training efforts by CMIS and collaborative partners to improve the completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of data required for posting to state and federal databases. This is accomplished by upgrades to case management systems, the implementation of clerk-district attorney electronic data exchanges in some jurisdictions, and upgrading computer equipment.

Traffic Records

The Traffic Records Project sends final disposition information on traffic cases to the Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles (OMV) for inclusion in the state driver's history database. In 2023, 582,833 traffic citation records were received from lower courts. Among those records 114,826 qualifying convictions were accepted by OMV. CMIS received traffic data from 64 parishes, 27 city courts, and 9 mayor courts.

CMIS Outreach

In 2023 CMIS committed more than \$2,022,158 in federal grants to Louisiana courts and criminal justice agencies throughout the state to support the improved reporting of qualifying records to the FBI NICS database, the Louisiana Computerized Criminal History database, and Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles (OMV). Federal grant funds for criminal projects were secured from the U.S. Department of Justice in collaboration with the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement (LCLE). The grant funds allowed the courts to address technology improvements, safety measures in the courts, and improve efficiency for judges and court staff.

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier funding is provided to city courts and district courts for replacement or enhancement of case management systems, or to implement electronic data exchange programs. This allows the courts to improve the completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of reporting traffic and DWI dispositions to CMIS for posting to the Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles (OMV) driver history database and the National Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS).

CMIS continues to improve the completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of disposition reporting by working with Louisiana Clerks of Court Association (LCCA) and Louisiana District Attorneys Association (LDAA). CMIS, LCCA, and LDAA work to identify collaborative training programs and the identification of causes for incomplete or missing information necessary for posting to the FBI NICS, CCH and OMV.

CMIS has continued efforts to improve data sharing throughout the state by partnering with the state's criminal justice agencies, offices, and associations through the Louisiana Integrated Criminal Justice Information System (ICJIS). The ICJIS Policy Board has the statutory directive to provide for common standards which ensure communications among the ICJIS systems, and a common forum for the discussion of issues affecting the agencies involved. The Board met consistently throughout 2023 and is working to further improve data sharing systems.

JUDICIAL COLLEGE

LOUISIANA JUDICIAL COLLEGE

As the judicial education branch of the Louisiana Supreme Court, the *Louisiana Judicial College's* mission is to “provide judges with high quality, comprehensive, and relevant professional development and training, in order to ensure the timely, fair, impartial, and efficient administration of justice for all citizens of Louisiana.”

As lawyers, judges are required to attend a minimum of 12.5 hours of continuing legal education every year – 1 hour of which must be on legal ethics and 1 hour on professional responsibility. Per Louisiana Supreme Court Rule XXX, Part H, Rule 3(f), effective January 1, 2013, judges must obtain 5 of those 12.5 hours from the Louisiana Judicial College. Pursuant to an amendment to this rule in 2022, judges who have attained the age of sixty-five (65) and may otherwise be exempt from MCLE requirements, are still required to earn at least five annual hours of training from the Louisiana Judicial College.

The College coordinates three major conferences per year: Spring Judges Conference, Summer School, and Fall Judges Conference. These are supplemented by other seminars with specialized content including New Judge Training; Evidence and Procedure Seminar; City, Family, and Juvenile Judges Seminar; Rural Courts Seminar; Torts Seminar; and other trainings coordinated in partnership with Supreme Court departments and other partners. Judges are also able to access lessons online and on-demand.

Louisiana welcomed thirteen new state judges in 2023, who started the year off by completing “New Judge Training” (which began in December 2022). This program includes a wide-ranging curriculum to help new judges transition to the bench, and also a judicial mentorship program. Soon after, the College provided the “Evidence and Procedure Seminar” with the Louisiana Association for Justice in March, and the Spring Judges Conference in Lake Charles in April. Summer School, held in partnership with the Louisiana State Bar Association in June, provided more CLE programming (over 100 hours) than any other conference throughout the year. In August, the College hosted the “City, Family, and Juvenile Judges Seminar” in Lafayette, which provided specialized trainings for judges with these specific jurisdictions. Fall Conference was held in October in New Orleans, with traditional educational and collegial activities, including a joint program on intergovernmental relations with state legislators. The Rural Courts Seminar was held in Carville, LA at the Gillis Long Center. The College closed out the year by co-hosting the “Torts Seminar” with the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel in December. By year’s end, the College also tallied hundreds of hours of participation in the College’s on-demand online CLE offerings.

The College’s curriculum represents over 200 annual “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) credit hours available to state judges at all levels. Curriculum topics include ethics, professionalism, and a wide variety of subject area specializations. Each program also provides opportunities for judges to receive updates on recent legislative and jurisprudential developments, and discussions on best practices for judicial administration. In addition to training, the College provides a number of important resources for judges including “Bench Books;” sample forms, model rules, and other template materials; and national resources. The College also continued its work with the Louisiana Municipal Association by providing training and resources for mayors, magistrates, city attorneys, clerks of court, and others involved in the administration of Mayor’s Courts throughout the state.

The Judicial College Staff are instrumental in providing a continued high level of service and support to the College’s mission. Judges and other court stakeholders are invited to contact Judicial College Executive Director Michael Schachtman at MSchachtman@lasc.org. The rest of the staff includes Janell McFarland-Forges, Program Attorney; Billie Bennett, Judicial Education Coordinator (Baton Rouge); Marion Armand, Administrative Assistant (Baton Rouge); and Flora Williams, Judicial Education Coordinator.

LOUISIANA JUDICIAL COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

LOUISIANA SUPREME COURT CO-CHAIRS

Justice Scott J. Crichton, Chair
Supreme Court of Louisiana
Justice William J. Crain, Vice-Chair
Supreme Court of Louisiana

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

C. Wendell Manning (President)
4th Judicial District Court
Nakisha Ervin-Knott (Vice President)
4th Circuit Court of Appeal
Anastasia “Staci” Wiley (Secretary)
8th Judicial District Court
Laurie Hulin (Treasurer)
15th Judicial District Court
Kirk Williams (Immediate Past President)
Baker City Court

MEMBERS

Raylyn Beevers, *2nd Parish Court, Jefferson Parish*
Shayna Beevers Morvant, *24th Judicial District Court*
Tiffany Chase, *4th Circuit Court of Appeal*
Michael Clement, *25th Judicial District Court*
Gregory J. Doucet, *27th Judicial District Court*
Thomas Duplantier, *15th Judicial District Court*
Daniel “Danny” Ellender, *2nd Circuit Court of Appeal*
Elizabeth Engolio, *18th Judicial District Court*
Tracey Flemings-Davillier, *Orleans Criminal District Court*
Karen Herman, *4th Circuit Court of Appeal*
Brady O’Callaghan, *1st Judicial District Court*
Martha Ann O’Neal, *36th Judicial District Court*
Patrice “Patti” Oppenheim, *22nd Judicial District Court*
Elizabeth Pickett, *3rd Circuit Court of Appeal*
Frances Pitman, *2nd Circuit Court of Appeal*
Judy Vendetto, *Baton Rouge City Court*

EX-OFFICIO

Desiree Dyess, *10th Judicial District Court President, Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges*
Theodore “Trey” Haik, *New Iberia City Court President, Louisiana City Judges Association; Rep. Tanner D. Magee Louisiana House of Representatives*
Sen. Gary Smith
Louisiana State Senate
Shayna Sonnier, Esq.
President, Louisiana State Bar Association
Lala Sylvester, *10th Judicial District Court President, Louisiana District Judges Association;*
Tina Vanichchagorn
Executive Counsel to the Governor

Past Presidents

Susan M. Chehardy, *5th Circuit Court of Appeal*
John Michael Guidry, *1st Circuit Court of Appeal*
Guy Holdridge, *1st Circuit Court of Appeal*
Patricia Koch, *9th Judicial District Court*
Madeleine Landrieu, *Loyola College of Law*
Lori A. Landry (ret.), *16th Judicial District Court*
Allison Penzato, *1st Circuit Court of Appeal*
Michael A. Pitman, *1st Judicial District Court*
Fredericka H. Wicker, *5th Circuit Court of Appeal*

CLERK OF COURT

CLERK OF COURT

The Clerk of Court's Office fulfilled the following key responsibilities and accomplished the following in 2023:

- Processed all filings and dispositions, including dissemination of actions to the parties, courts, and the public via U.S. mail, electronic-mail, and the Internet.
- Scanned all filings and dispositions, which are available to Court personnel via the Court's case management system.
- Continued to fine-tune the Court's Thomson Reuters' C-Track Case Management Software for a more efficient and expeditious processing of case matters.
- Continued reorganization of the Court's records rooms, including accelerated efforts to restore and archive older records, in preparation for the electronic scanning of all case files.
- Continued concerted efforts to promote within the Court and the legal community the electronic submission of all documents, filings, and records, which proved to be invaluable during the Court's closure for the COVID-19 pandemic and in the wake of several weather events as the Clerk's Office was able to maintain through advanced remote capabilities the uninterrupted processing of filings and dispositions.
- Bar Admissions. In 2023, 451 candidates were admitted to the practice of law, evidencing an increase from 2022 which had a candidate admission of 410, the lowest admission number in the last several years. The 2022 decline was attributed to the re-institution of the customary bar examination protocols since the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the Court's 2020 admission of 643 bar candidates, who were subject of a bar examination waiver due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 555 individuals were admitted in 2021 after the administering of a modified bar examination. The 2021 admission number was considerably higher than 2019 when 480 candidates were admitted and was virtually the same number for those admitted in 2017 and 2018. To put the overall bar admission rate in perspective, 542 attorneys were admitted to the practice of law over a decade ago in 2013.
- Issued Certificates of Good Standing. The number of certificates of good standing issued on an annual basis continues to rise. In 2023, 2,258 certificates were issued, an increase from the 2,107 issued in 2022, and the 1,974 issued in 2021. Note: Newly admitted attorneys receive two certificates, free of charge, which are not included in these numbers.
- Managed logistics for events held in the building, which included fourteen sessions of oral argument sittings over eleven days, thirty-two in-person court conference days, eighteen Judiciary Commission hearing and meeting days, eight Law Institute meeting days, 15 bar admission swearing-in ceremonies, three health clinics, and in excess of fifty other law-related events. The number of events has increased considerably from 2022 and 2021.
- Oversaw courthouse general maintenance and improvements. Assisted in necessary renovations to the chambers of two justices. Through the Division of Administration, assisted with the outstanding Hurricane Ida insurance claims for repairs to damaged areas of the building, including the roof, Courtroom and Law Library. Participated in the planning of a complete building shutdown for the period of several days for the replacement of electrical breaker boxes. Ongoing assistance in the development and funding of a major exterior building waterproofing, window refurbishing, and vestibule construction project, as well as continued repairs to the remainder of the roof.



Veronica O. Koclanes
Clerk of Court

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

- Veronica Koclanes, JD
Clerk of Court
- Katie Marjanovic, JD
Chief Deputy Clerk of Court
- Theresa McCarthy, JD
2nd Deputy Clerk of Court
- Ryan Chan
Deputy Clerk
- Eddie Gonzales
Deputy Clerk—Records Manager
- John White, CPA
Fiscal Manager
- Jose Torres
Director of Security



The Justices of the Louisiana Supreme Court hosted the Louisiana State Bar Association's 38th annual Pro Bono Publico & Children's Law Awards Ceremony on May 17, 2023.



The Louisiana Supreme Court hosted the Board Meeting of the Supreme Court of Louisiana Historical Society (SCLAHS), at which outgoing SCLAHS Board President Donna Fraiche was honored.

JUDICIAL BUDGET

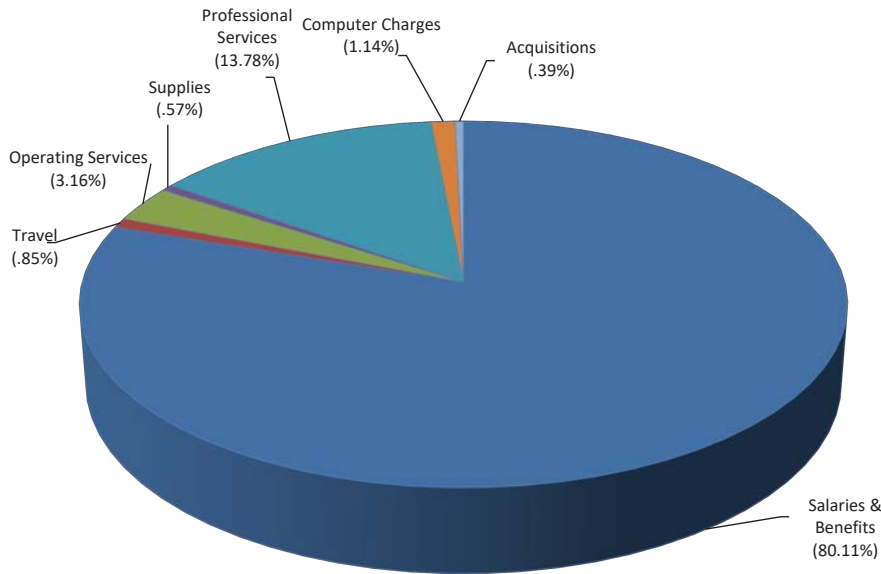
JUDICIAL BUDGET

Louisiana does not have a unified state court funding system. Operations of district, parish, and city courts are primarily funded by local governments. An annual state legislative appropriation funds the operations of the Louisiana Supreme Court and the five courts of appeal, as well as the salaries of all state court judges. The state also funds a portion of the salaries of parish and city court judges, and the compensation of retired and *ad hoc* judges.

FY 2023-2024 Approved Judicial Appropriation - \$198,517,464

In FY 2023-2024, state appropriated funds totaled \$198,517,464¹:

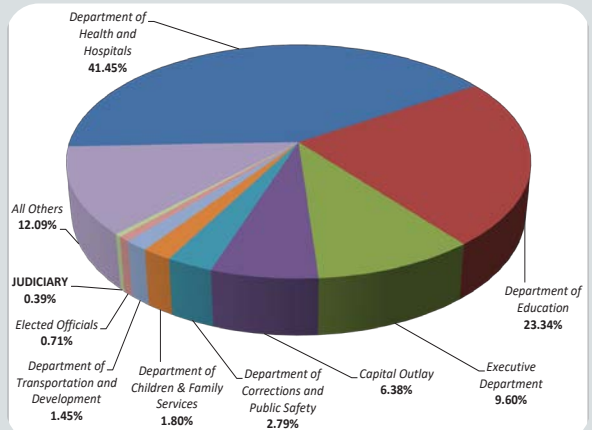
Salaries and Benefits ²	159,039,920	80.11% of total budget
Professional Services	27,346,184	13.78% of total budget
Operating Services	6,267,826	3.16% of total budget
Computer charges	2,263,770	1.14% of total budget
Travel	1,683,209	.85% of total budget
Supplies	1,137,459	.57% of total budget
Acquisitions	779,096	.39% of total budget



¹In accordance with La. R.S. 24:513, the Louisiana Supreme Court is audited regularly by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor, and the audit report is available on the Legislative Auditor’s website at www.la.state.la.us.

²Includes Salaries and/or Benefits for 363 state Judges, 7 Commissioners, 210 Supreme Court employees, 364 Courts of Appeal employees, 111 designated lower court employees, and 18 retired judges or widows in the Unfunded Pension system.

LOUISIANA STATE BUDGET 2023-2024



Total State Budget:
\$50,969,300,676
Judiciary Budget:
\$198,517,464

In FY 2023-2024, .39% of the state’s general fund was appropriated to the state judiciary.

BAR ADMISSIONS

COMMITTEE ON BAR ADMISSIONS

The *Committee on Bar Admissions* is comprised of 18 active members of the Louisiana State Bar Association appointed by the Louisiana Supreme Court to administer the bar admissions system. It is the duty of the Committee to recommend for admission only those applicants who meet the eligibility requirements set forth in La. Sup. Ct. Rule XVII.

In 2023, the Committee received and processed 768 bar examination applications, 306 law student registration forms, 70 A.D.A. requests, 11 equivalency applications and 15 in-house counsel applications. The bar examination was administered on February 13, 15, 17, 2023 and July 24, 26, 28, 2023. Examiners developed examination questions and, with the assistance of more than 300 volunteer graders, scored test papers for 190 applicants who sat for the February examination, and 502 applicants who sat for the July examination. The pass rate was 42.11 % in February, and 69.92% for July.

In order to assure that each applicant recommended for admission possessed the requisite character and fitness, the Committee’s Character and Fitness Department investigated and considered the backgrounds of all applicants. As part of the character and fitness screening process, 9 Commissioner hearings were held and no matters were argued before the Supreme Court. The Committee’s Character and Fitness Panel recommended 5 applicants be conditionally admitted and 5 applicants be denied admission.

COMMITTEE ON BAR ADMISSIONS

Larry Feldman, Jr.
Chairman
 L. David Cromwell
Immediate Past Chair
 Celeste R. Coco-Ewing
Director of Character & Fitness
 Dow M. Edwards
Character and Fitness Panel Member
 Jerry Edwards
Character and Fitness Panel Member
 Edward Francis Harold
Testing Accommodations
 C. Peck Hayne, Jr.
Director of Testing

Stephanie A. Finley
Testing Committee Member
 Magistrate Donna P. Currault
Testing Committee Member
 Thomas P. Owen, Jr.
Examiner—Civil Code I
 Joseph M. Placer, Jr.
Examiner—Civil Code II
 Stacy Grove Butler
Examiner—Civil Code III
 Erin Wedge Latuso
Examiner—Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure

Zita M. Andrus
Examiner—Torts
 Mark J. Fernandez
Examiner—Business Entities
 Kathryn Weatherly Munson
Examiner—Constitutional Law
 Adam P. Johnson
Examiner—Criminal Law, Procedure & Evidence
 Glenn L. Langley
Examiner—Federal Jurisdiction & Procedure



LOUISIANA ATTORNEY DISCIPLINARY BOARD

LOUISIANA ATTORNEY DISCIPLINARY BOARD

The year 2023 marked the return to more normal operations and regulatory efforts by the lawyer discipline system in Louisiana. The national historical trend over the last five to seven years reflected decreasing numbers of complaints filed against lawyers that alleged ethical misconduct. Louisiana's experience was similar with total complaints historically averaging 3,200 or more per year falling to less than 2,300 in some recent years. That trend appears to have reversed and in 2023 the total number of written complaints rose coming in at 2,439. A breakdown of the most common areas of concern included neglect of client's legal matters, allegations of lawyer dishonesty in their dealings with clients, lack of reasonable communication, and an overall general dissatisfaction with the quality of representation. Of concern is the growing instances of trust account overdraft by lawyers reflecting in most instances significant mishandling of client and third-party funds held by lawyers in their fiduciary capacity.

The prosecution efforts by the Office of Disciplinary Counsel for the year reflected 73 sets of newly docketed matters through the Disciplinary Board and 43 consent discipline filings submitted directly with the Louisiana Supreme Court. An additional 51 admonitions were levied against lawyers during the year, a form of confidential discipline for very minor instances of misconduct. A partial breakdown reflects that the Court issued 8 public reprimands, 11 interim suspension orders, 54 suspensions, 6 disbarments, and 3 permanent disbarments for the year in addition to 62 orders imposing forms of monitored probation.

As the disciplinary agency has done for nearly 3 decades, the Board enlisted the assistance of volunteer speakers to produce free, high quality continuing legal education offerings across the state including in Bossier City, Pineville, Lafayette, Baton Rouge, and Metairie. Over the years, the discipline system has provided tens of thousands of hours of free instruction to lawyers, all with a view towards helping lawyers better understand their ethical obligations, improve client satisfaction, with a goal of reducing the number of complaints lodged against them.

Near the end of 2023, the long serving Chief Disciplinary Counsel announced his retirement after completing 34 years with disciplinary agency in support of the Supreme Court's obligation to regulate the legal profession—4 years as a volunteer hearing committee member, 2 years as a volunteer Board member, and over 28 years as the state's disciplinary counsel. The Board, charged with the responsibility of hiring a new disciplinary counsel, selected a new Chief to lead the ODC who was expected to assume those responsibilities in March of 2024.

Years ago, the Supreme Court reaffirmed that ours is a "self-regulating" profession. We police our own, not just through the efforts of the disciplinary agency but through the actions and work of lawyers every day. The Court's opinions reflect the self-evident observation that the 23,000 plus lawyers in this state have a duty to collectively engage in and support the regulatory effort. Together with the Office of Disciplinary Counsel and the Board, Louisiana lawyers continue to work to justify the faith placed in members of our profession by members of the public.

LOUISIANA ATTORNEY DISCIPLINARY BOARD

Brian D. Landry, *Chair*
 Paula H. Clayton, *Vice-Chair*
 Valerie Briggs Bargas (LSBA Member)
 R. Alan Breithaupt
 Todd Samuels Clemons
 Albert Rudolph Dennis III
 Susan Perret DesOrmeaux
 Alfreda Sellers Diamond
 Dr. Valerie S. Fields
 James B. Letten
 Aldric "Ric" C. Poirier Jr.
 M. Todd Richard
 Erica Johnson Rose
 Lori Allen Waters

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Louisiana Supreme Court
www.lasc.org

Committee on Bar Admissions
www.lascba.org

Law Library of Louisiana
<https://lasc.libguides.com>

Louisiana Center for Law & Civic Education
www.lalce.org

Louisiana State Bar Association
www.lsba.org

Judiciary Commission of Louisiana
<https://judiciarycommissionla.org/>

Louisiana Judicial College
<https://lajudicialcollege.org>

Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board
www.ladb.org

JUDICIARY COMMISSION OF LOUISIANA

JUDICIARY COMMISSION OF LOUISIANA

The *Judiciary Commission of Louisiana* (Commission) is an independent, constitutionally created body charged with receiving and evaluating complaints of ethical misconduct against active state court judges and other judicial officers. The Commission conducts investigations and hearings to determine whether there is good cause to believe that a judge has committed an ethical violation that may warrant a recommendation of public discipline to the Louisiana Supreme Court.

Judges are governed by a Code of Judicial Conduct and the Louisiana Constitution. Even though judges are elected, they are subject to a separate disciplinary process that may result in removal from office. This disciplinary process provides an extra layer of protection to the public and allows judges to be disciplined in ways that are unavailable for other elected public officials (i.e., through, in appropriate cases, removal from office or suspension from office with or without pay).

In 2023, the Judiciary Commission of Louisiana received and docketed 382 complaints against judges and justices of the peace, and 125 complaints were pending from previous years. The Commission's Office of Special Counsel also received and responded to 180 requests for complaint forms. As of December 31, 2023, the Commission had 125 files pending, having disposed of over 367 files in 2023.

In 2023, 224 complaints were screened out as not within the jurisdiction of the Commission or failing to allege facts implicating a possible violation of the Code of Judicial Conduct or Louisiana Constitution. 158 complaints were reviewed to consider the need for investigation.

The Commission authorized in-depth investigations in 39 complaints, including some complaints filed before January 1, 2023.

In 2023, the Commission filed notices of hearing against three judges and one justice of the peace. A hearing before a randomly appointed hearing officer was conducted in one case. Hearings before randomly appointed hearing officers were scheduled in two cases but were not conducted because a motion to dispense with a hearing before a hearing officer was granted after stipulations were reached. Additionally, during the year, one judge and one justice of the peace personally appeared before the Commission for questioning after entering into stipulations in lieu of a hearing before a hearing officer.

In 2023, the Judiciary Commission filed with the Louisiana Supreme Court two recommendations for judicial discipline. The Supreme Court imposed the following discipline in 2023:

- The Court publicly censured one judge, upon a joint petition for consent discipline, for engaging in improper *ex parte* communications with a litigant and failing to expeditiously recuse himself from the matter and, in another matter, for mishandling a contempt proceeding involving an attorney, filing an unsolicited *per curiam* in the appellate court regarding the contempt finding and sentence, and mishandling recusal procedures in subsequent cases involving the attorney. *In re Bradberry*, 2023-1828 (La. 2/24/23), 355 So. 3d 1075.
- The Court publicly censured one judge for improper *ex parte* communications with the District Attorney's Office in a criminal matter that resulted in a commitment to rule on a motion that had not yet been filed and, once the motion was filed, an improper order summarily releasing certain documents from seal. *In re Canaday*, 2023-0735 (La. 10/20/23), 372 So. 3d 328.

In 2023, one judge resigned after the filing of a Notice of Hearing, and one justice of the peace resigned after the Commission made a recommendation of discipline with the Supreme Court but before the Court ruled on the matter.

In 2023, the Judiciary Commission filed with the Louisiana Supreme Court one recommendation of interim disqualification against a justice of the peace, which was dismissed after the justice of the peace resigned from judicial office.

Pursuant to the May 1, 2020, revisions to Louisiana Supreme Court Rule XXIII, the Commission may publish and report the number of cautions, admonishments, and DRDAs issued during a year and a general description of the underlying conduct without identifying the respondent judges involved. In 2023, the Commission admonished two judicial officers for the

THE JUDICIARY COMMISSION OF LOUISIANA, CREATED IN 1968 BY AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE IX, CONSTITUTION OF 1921, IS CONTINUED IN EXISTENCE BY ARTICLE V, SECTION 25, CONSTITUTION OF 1974.

2023 JUDICIARY COMMISSION

Mr. Christopher Ieyoub, *Chair*
 Judge Robin D. Pittman, *Vice Chair*
 Mr. Robert P. Ackerman
 Ms. VaRhonda E. Burrell, Esq.
 Mrs. Suzanne H. Stinson
 Mr. John D. Fitzmorris, Jr., Esq.
 Judge Bruce Hampton
 Ms. Judith Rozier
 Judge Sharon D. Wilson

STAFF OF THE JUDICIARY COMMISSION

Sandra A. Vujnovich, JD
Chief Executive Officer
 Kelly Blackwell, JD
Commission Legal Counsel

STAFF OF THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL

Michelle A. Beaty, JD, *Special Counsel*

Continued on next page

JUDICIARY COMMISSION OF LOUISIANA

Continued from previous page

following conduct:

- Admonishment issued for conducting an independent investigation in connection with potential future claims and for improperly threatening arrest for the failure to comply with a judgment of eviction.
- Admonishment issued for failing to adequately address a staff member's use of a racial slur with a litigant, conducting independent fact-finding, and engaging in a pattern of failing to follow clear and established law regarding evictions.

The Commission cautioned eleven judicial officers for the following conduct:

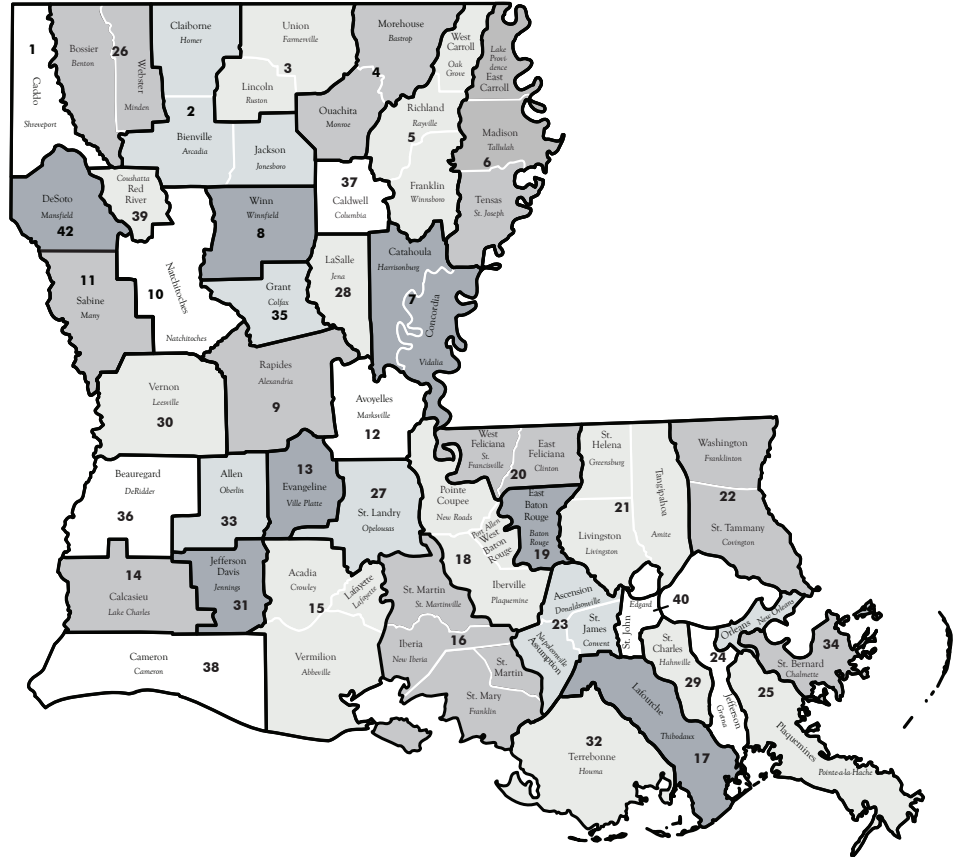
- Caution issued for making a disparaging and speculative accusation against an attorney in open court unbecoming the judiciary.
- Caution issued for remarks indicating unwillingness to dismiss a matter under circumstances where dismissal was required by law, which gave an appearance of partiality or bias.
- Caution issued for employing an immediate family member of a judge elected to the same court.
- Caution issued for more than one-year delay in issuing a ruling following trial and failure to report the matter on cases under advisement report.
- Caution issued for directing that a contempt fine be paid to an entity other than the court.
- Caution issued for improperly ordering an appearance bond forfeited and for applying it towards a judgment debt instead of imposing a separate contempt fine to be paid to the court.
- Caution issued for failure to self-recuse when recusal was mandated by law.
- Caution issued for failure to respond to litigant regarding the status of a case filed in justice of the peace court.
- Caution issued for failing to act appropriately in response to a credible fire alarm while court was in session.
- Caution issued for contacting law enforcement to obtain information regarding a family member's criminal matter.
- Caution issued for improperly amending an eviction petition at the subject premises after it had already been served, which gave an appearance of impropriety and impartiality.

The Commission entered into two DRDAs in 2023 for the following conduct:

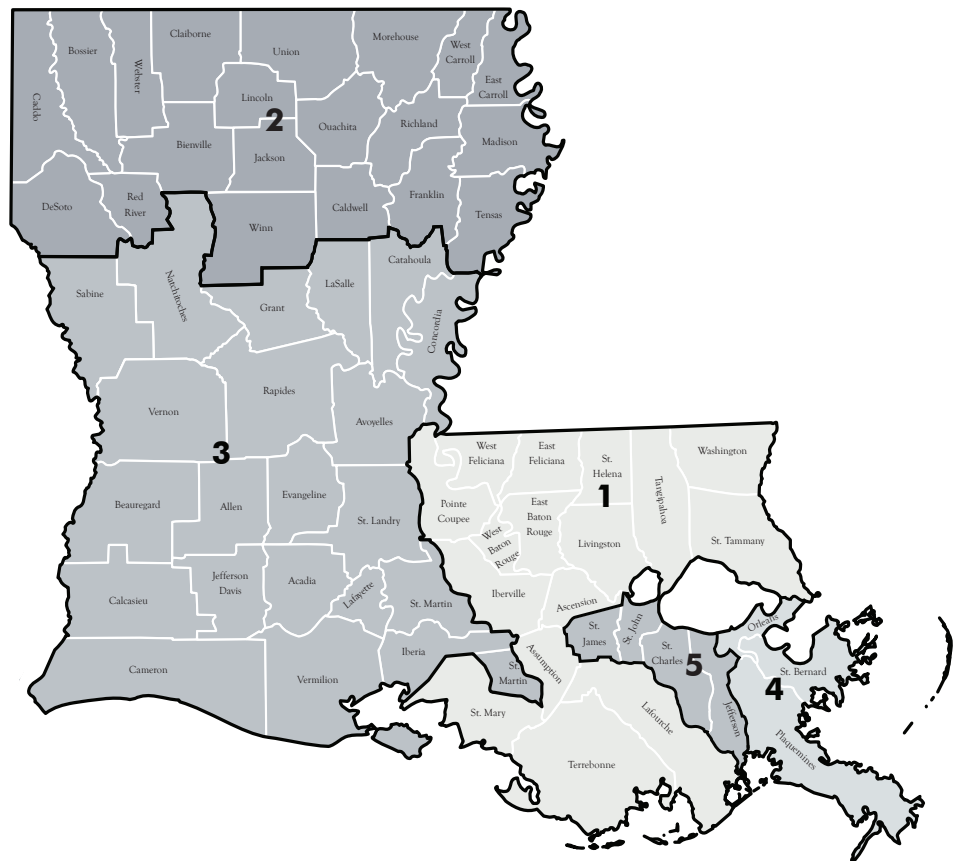
- DRDA entered into based upon the failure to accurately report income and earned fees on Personal Financial Disclosure Statements submitted to the Louisiana Supreme Court.
- DRDA entered into based upon the failure to allow a defendant the required time under the law to answer petition, charging an excessive filing fee for a motion, engaging in ex parte communications about substantive issues pertaining to the case, and making pledges, promises, or commitments inconsistent with the impartial performance of the adjudicative duties of office.

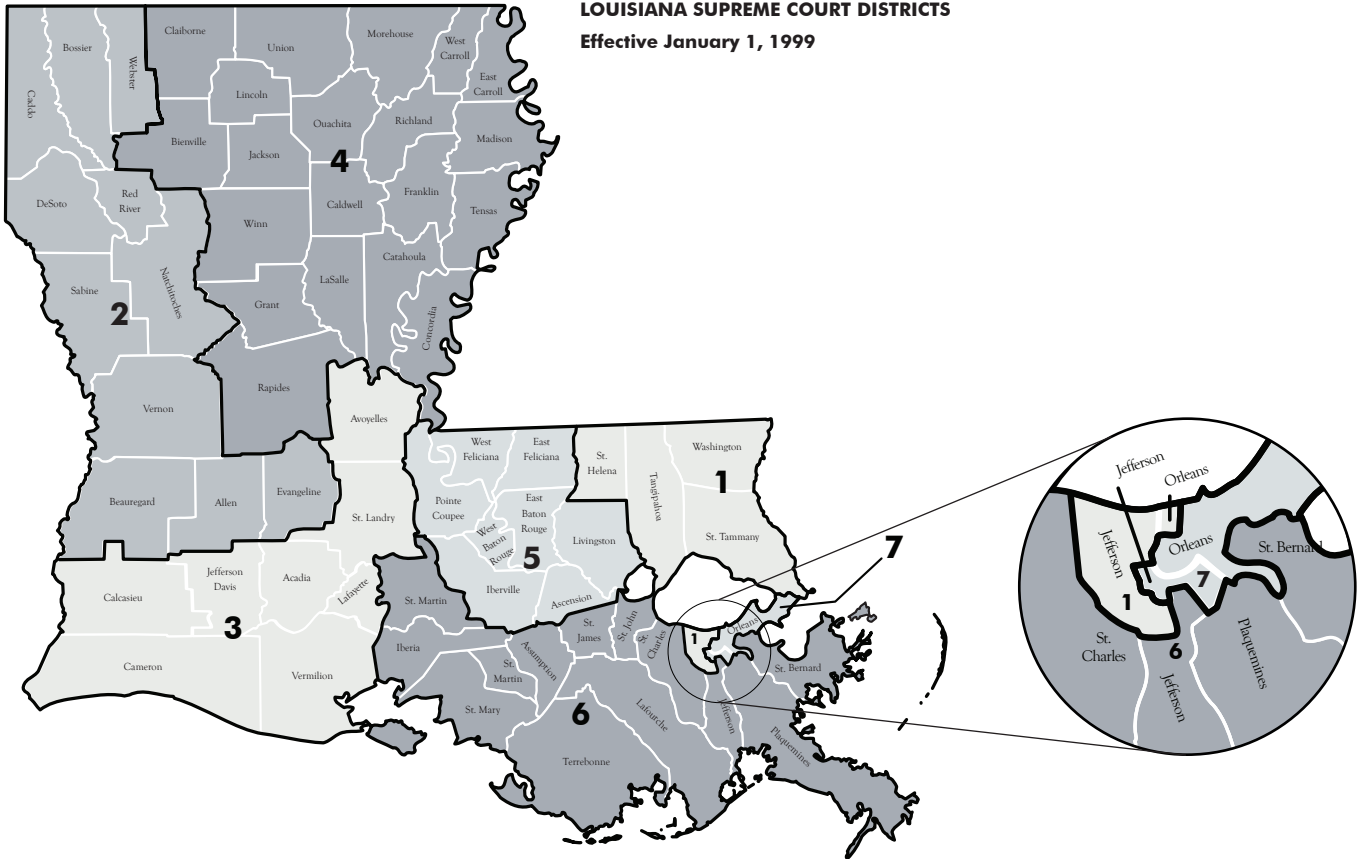
Regarding the nine-member volunteer membership of the Commission, in 2023, citizen member Robert P. Ackerman completed a four-year term and was replaced by Lloyd Clark of Harvey, and attorney member VaRhonda E. Burrell completed a four-year term and was replaced by Thomas C. Wicker, IV of New Orleans. Judge Robin D. Pittman of Orleans Criminal District Court was elected as Chair of the Commission, succeeding attorney Christopher Ieyoub of Lake Charles. Citizen member Suzanne H. Stinson was elected as Vice-Chair.

LOUISIANA DISTRICT COURTS
JUDICIAL DISTRICTS



LOUISIANA COURTS
OF APPEAL CIRCUITS





LOUISIANA SUPREME COURT DISTRICTS
Effective January 1, 1999

***Districts 1, 6 & 7 Detail:**

Jefferson Parish Precincts in the First Louisiana Supreme Court District are 1-H through 9-H; 1-K through 35-K; 1 through 46; 51 through 108; 115 through 138; 150 through 155; 157A; 157B; 158; 170; 186; 198 and 199.

Jefferson Parish Precincts in the Sixth Louisiana Supreme Court District are 1-G1; 1-LA, 1-LB; 2-L; 182 through 185; 189 through 197; and 246A through 250.

Jefferson Parish Precincts in the Seventh Louisiana Supreme Court District are 1-G; 2-G through 11-G; 1-W through 9-W; 156; 171 through 181; 187; 188; 210 through 217; and 225 through 238.

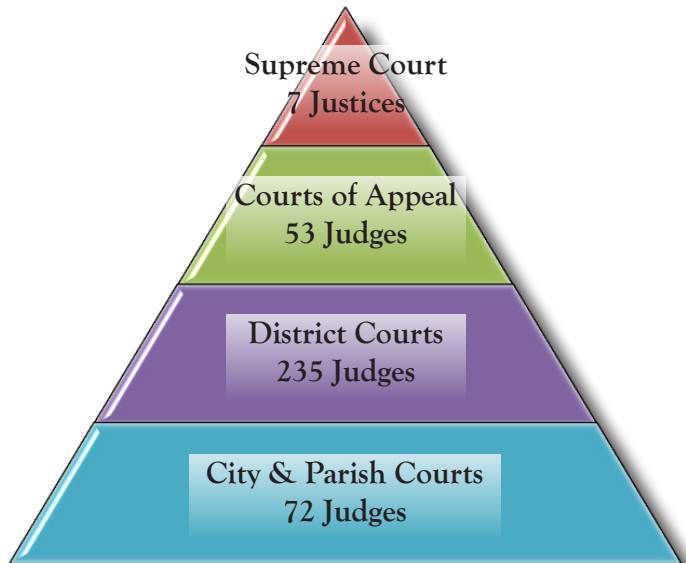
Orleans Parish Precincts in the First Louisiana Supreme Court District are 3-20; 4-8 through 4-11; 4-14 through 4-23; 5-13 through 5-18; and 17-17 through 17-21.

The remainder of Orleans Parish Precincts are in the Seventh Louisiana Supreme Court District.



LOUISIANA'S JUDICIAL BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT

The judicial power of Louisiana, which is the power to interpret the Constitution and the laws of the state, is vested in the Judicial Branch of Government, made up of a supreme court, courts of appeal, district courts, city courts, and other courts authorized by the Constitution. In Louisiana, judges are elected. The court structure consists of: 1 supreme court, 5 courts of appeal, 43 district courts, 5 juvenile or family courts, 48 city courts, and 3 parish courts. A total of 367 judges preside over Louisiana state courts.



Appellate Courts

Supreme Court

- Seven justices, 10 year terms
- Sits in New Orleans
- Chief Justice is the most tenured in office
- Justices preside *en banc* (full court)

Circuit Courts of Appeal

- 53 judges, 10 year terms
- Five circuits:
 - 1st Circuit: Baton Rouge, 12 judges
 - 2nd Circuit: Shreveport, 9 judges
 - 3rd Circuit: Lake Charles, 12 judges
 - 4th Circuit: New Orleans, 12 judges
 - 5th Circuit: Gretna, 8 judges
- Cases generally reviewed by three-judge panels

Trial Courts

District, Juvenile and Family

- 235 judges, six or eight year terms
- 43 judicial districts
- 4 juvenile courts
- 1 family court
- Number of judges in each court based on caseload and other factors
- Judges preside individually, not in panels

City and Parish Courts

- 67 city court judges, six year terms
- 5 parish court judges, six year terms
- 48 city courts
- 3 parish courts
- Judges preside individually, not in panels



LOUISIANA SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court of Louisiana is Louisiana's highest court and is domiciled in the City of New Orleans.

Under the Constitution of 1974, the Louisiana Supreme Court is composed of seven justices elected from districts throughout Louisiana. The justices of the Louisiana Supreme Court serve 10 year terms of office. The senior justice in point of service is the Chief Justice, who is the chief administrative officer of the judicial system.

The Supreme Court has *exclusive jurisdiction* in cases involving disciplinary action against lawyers and judges. These cases cannot be heard by any other state court – only the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court has *appellate jurisdiction* in cases in which a law or ordinance has been declared unconstitutional and in capital cases where the death penalty has been imposed. These cases originate in the trial court, but bypass review by the intermediate courts of appeal in order to be heard directly by the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court has *supervisory jurisdiction* over all state courts. Cases from courts reach the Supreme Court after they have been heard by a lower court; however, the Supreme Court does not automatically hear these cases. A party must first convince the Court in a special application that its case merits high court review because an error occurred in the opinion, judgment, or ruling of the lower court. This procedure is known as *applying for writs*.



The Justices of the Louisiana Supreme Court hosted the Deans of each of Louisiana's four law schools as a welcome to new LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center Dean Alena Allen. Joining the Justices were Dean Madeleine Landrieu of Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, Chancellor John Pierre of Southern University Law Center, and then-Dean David Meyer of Tulane Law School.

2023 Supreme Court Stats

In 2023, there were 1,725 filings (case initiations) filed with the Office of the Clerk of Court. The number is 164 less than the 1,889 filed in 2022, 269 less than the 1,994 filed in 2021, and 220 more than the 1,505 cases filed in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the last four years represent a fluctuation in filings, the number dropped annually after 2013, which had 3,017 filings. Case submissions were at 2,716 in 2014, 2,365 in 2015, 2,283 in 2016, 2,181 in 2017, 2,117 in 2018, and 2,096 in 2019. The all-time filing high occurred in 1999 when there were 3,652 filings, which is 52.7% higher than 2023, and 48.2% higher than 2022. Although there has been a general decline in the total number of filings as with all courts, there continues to be a significant number of cases being submitted where expedited consideration is requested. In 2022, priority consideration was sought in 181 cases, compared to the 149 cases in 2021. Since these cases interrupt the normal processing of work and are labor intensive, requiring immediate attention by the justices, their staff, and the Clerk of Court's Office, the Rules of the Supreme Court were amended on December 15, 2022, to institute procedural limitations for the filing of cases seeking expedited consideration. In 2023, 135 priority filings were instituted, a 25% reduction from 2022 which is seemingly attributable to the rule change.



Justice Piper Griffin speaks with students from St. Augustine High School, St. Mary's Academy, and St. Katharine Drexel Preparatory School (formerly Xavier Prep, her alma mater) taking part in the Allen Ray Bolin Trial Advocacy Workshop.

Louisiana Supreme Court

CASE FILING BY TYPE

SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA *Two Year Trend in Activity*

	2022 Total	2023 Total	2023 Civil	2023 Criminal
APPEALS				
Filed	2	2	2	0
Dismissed	1	1	1	0
Opinions Rendered	3	2	2	0
With written opinions	3	2	2	0
Per curiams	0	0	0	0
WRITS				
Applications Filed (Except Prisoner Pro Se)	1,073	961	661	300
Prisoner Pro Se Writs	608	578	7	571
Granted	122	139	90	49
To be argued	39	36	27	9
With orders & transferred	83	103	63	40
Dismissed	30	34	23	11
Not Considered	174	272	26	246
Denied	1,121	1,506	557	949
Opinions Rendered	48	37	30	7
REHEARINGS				
Applied for	30	20	18	2
Granted	1	0	0	0
Denied/Dismissed	27	18	14	4
Opinions Rendered	0	0	0	0
ORIGINAL JURISDICTION				
Petitions Filed	206	184	184	0
Opinions Rendered	13	14	14	0
Other Actions (GwO-Dism)	171	197	197	0
OTHER MATTERS				
Filed	0	0	0	0
Opinions Rendered	0	0	0	0
Other Actions	0	0	0	0
OTHER PER CURIAM OPINIONS RENDERED	173	0	0	0
TOTAL FILINGS	1,889	1,725	854	871
Per Justice	270	246	122	124
TOTAL OPINIONS RENDERED	64	53	46	7

The Supreme Court has exclusive original jurisdiction in cases involving disciplinary actions against lawyers and judges, appellate jurisdiction in capital cases where the death penalty has been imposed and in cases in which a law or ordinance has been declared unconstitutional, as well as supervisory jurisdiction over all courts.



COURTS OF APPEAL

Louisiana has established the intermediate courts of appeal between the district courts and the Supreme Court. The work of the intermediate appellate courts is divided among five courts of appeal, domiciled in Baton Rouge, Shreveport, Lake Charles, New Orleans, and Gretna. The First Circuit (Baton Rouge) has twelve judges, the Second Circuit (Shreveport) has nine, the Third Circuit (Lake Charles) has twelve, the Fourth Circuit (New Orleans) has twelve, and the Fifth Circuit (Gretna) has eight. The majority are elected from districts, with a few judges being elected at large within their circuits. Court of appeal judges are elected for ten-year terms. The judge oldest in point of service on each court of appeal is the chief judge and administers the court subject to rules adopted by it.

Each court of appeal has appellate jurisdiction over all civil matters, all matters appealed from family and juvenile courts, and all criminal cases triable by a jury which arise within its circuit, except for those cases appealable directly to the Supreme Court or to the district courts.

Each court sits in panels of at least three judges selected according to rules adopted by the court. A majority of the judges sitting in a case must concur to render judgment. However, in civil matters only, when a judgment of a district court or an administrative agency determination in a workers' compensation claim is to be modified or reversed and one judge dissents, the case must be reargued before a panel of at least five judges prior to rendition of judgment, and a majority must concur to render judgment.

Except as limited to questions of law by the Louisiana Constitution, or as provided by law in the review of administrative agency decisions, the appellate jurisdiction of the courts of appeal extends to both law and facts. However, in criminal matters, the appellate jurisdiction extends only to questions of law. The supervisory jurisdiction of each circuit court of appeal extends to all cases arising within its circuit, subject to the general supervisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

Total filings of writs and appeals remained at the same level in 2023 as were filed in 2022. Total filings of writs and appeal in 2023 totaled 4,142, compared to 4,145 in 2022. Filings of appeals increased by 5% in 2023, increasing from 1,430 in 2022, to 1,496 in 2023. There was an increase in criminal appeals filed for 2023, rising from 337 in 2022 to 454 in 2023. Civil appeals filed declined from 1,093 in 2022 to 1,042 in 2023. The number of writs filed declined by -3% from 2,715 in 2022 to 2,646 in 2023. The total number of opinions rendered by the appellate courts remained at the same level of opinions rendered in 2023, where 1,296 were rendered in 2022 and 1,293 in 2023.

2023 Courts of Appeal Stats

The number of opinions rendered per judge totaled 32 in the First Circuit Court of Appeal, 19 in the Second Circuit Court of Appeal, 22 in the Third Circuit Court of Appeal, 22 in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal, and 26 in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.

LOUISIANA COURTS OF APPEAL *Two Year Trend in Activity*

	2022 Total	2023 Total	2023 Civil	2023 Criminal
FIRST CIRCUIT				
Appeals Filed	492	479	364	115
Motions Filed	36	42	24	18
Writs Filed (except Pro Se)	553	523	357	166
Writs Refused*	418	384	263	121
Writs Granted	168	126	97	29
Pro Se Writs Filed	326	328	42	286
Pro Se Writs Refused*	312	257	20	237
Pro Se Writs Granted	46	44	12	32
Appeals Dismissed/Transferred	64	57	47	10
Consolidated Opinions	29	31	31	0
Opinions Rendered **	412	387	310	77
Rehearings Acted Upon ***	88	72	65	7
Appeals Pending	256	277	211	66
Argued But Not Decided	64	40	36	4
To Be Argued	192	237	175	62
Opinions Rendered Per Judge by Circuit	34	32	26	6
SECOND CIRCUIT				
Appeals Filed	200	250	133	117
Motions Filed	9	4	4	0
Writs Filed (except Pro Se)	166	194	112	82
Writs Refused*	140	138	87	51
Writs Granted	47	50	22	28
Pro Se Writs Filed	166	220	9	211
Pro Se Writs Refused*	145	182	5	177
Pro Se Writs Granted	24	26	3	23
Appeals Dismissed/Transferred	19	29	27	2
Consolidated Opinions	11	9	2	7
Opinions Rendered **	181	173	82	91
Rehearings Acted Upon ***	28	19	15	4
Appeals Pending	100	147	72	75
Argued But Not Decided	30	35	14	21
To Be Argued	70	112	58	54
Opinions Rendered Per Judge by Circuit	20	19	9	10
THIRD CIRCUIT				
Appeals Filed	324	299	197	102
Motions Filed	10	18	9	9
Writs Filed (except Pro Se)	308	306	221	85
Writs Refused*	252	252	194	58
Writs Granted	54	62	42	20
Pro Se Writs Filed	186	175	5	170
Pro Se Writs Refused*	167	143	2	141
Pro Se Writs Granted	21	13	0	13
Appeals Dismissed/Transferred	32	44	37	7
Consolidated Opinions	7	3	2	1
Opinions Rendered **	293	260	163	97
Rehearings Acted Upon ***	48	46	31	15
Appeals Pending	149	154	103	51
Argued But Not Decided	15	12	9	3
To Be Argued	134	142	94	48
Opinions Rendered Per Judge by Circuit	24	22	14	8

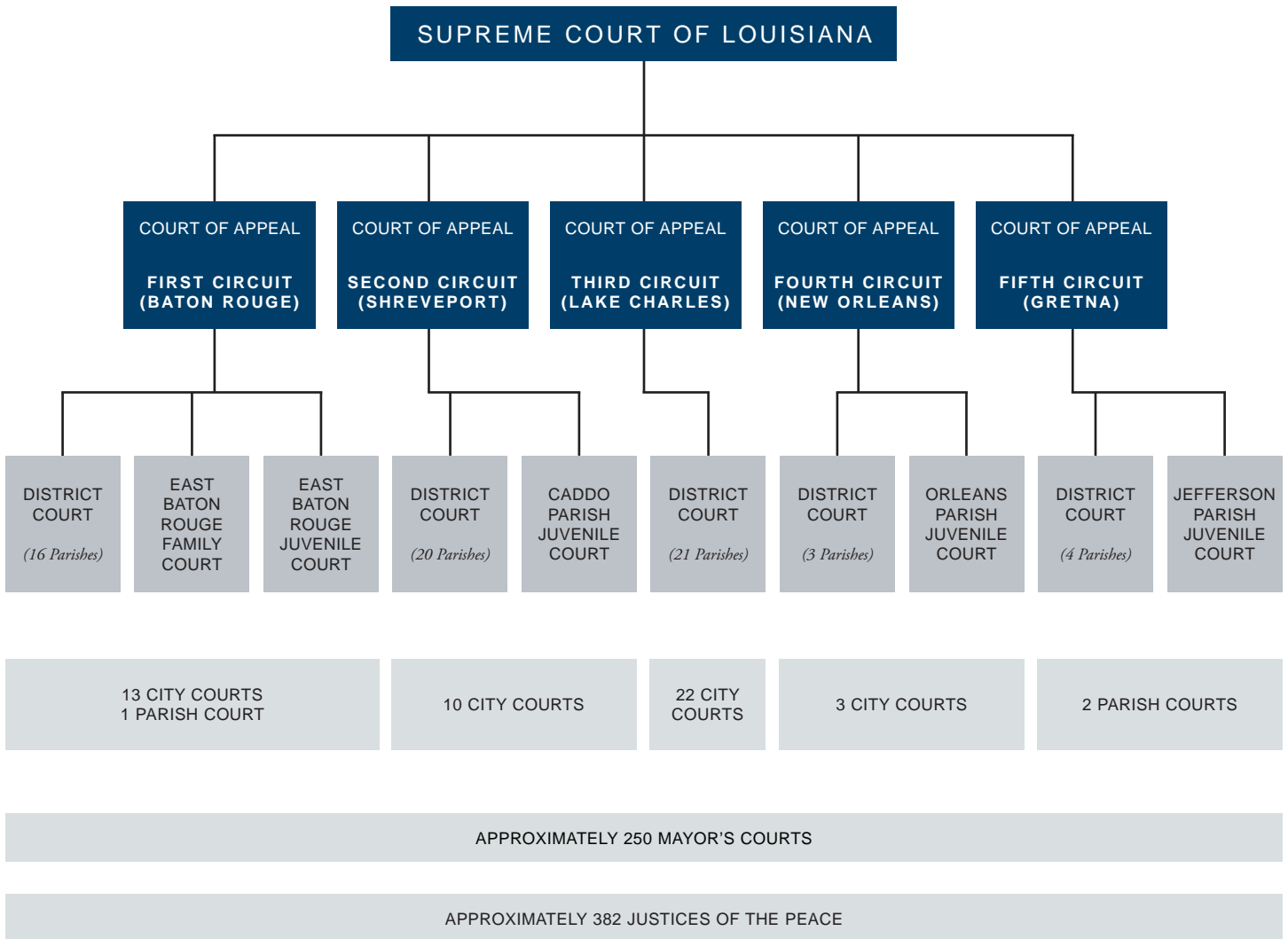
LOUISIANA COURTS OF APPEAL Two Year Trend in Activity

	2022 Total	2023 Total	2023 Civil	2023 Criminal
FOURTH CIRCUIT				
Appeals Filed	244	249	205	44
Motions Filed	23	49	24	25
Writs Filed (except Pro Se)	409	434	277	157
Writs Refused*	312	312	201	111
Writs Granted	29	50	26	24
Pro Se Writs Filed	195	92	4	88
Pro Se Writs Refused*	135	63	1	62
Pro Se Writs Granted	45	23	3	20
Appeals Dismissed/Transferred	22	29	27	2
Consolidated Opinions	1	18	18	0
Opinions Rendered **	264	265	212	53
Rehearings Acted Upon***	46	30	25	5
Appeals Pending	126	126	92	34
Argued But Not Decided	5	3	3	0
To Be Argued	121	123	89	34
Opinions Rendered Per Judge by Circuit	22	22	18	4
FIFTH CIRCUIT				
Appeals Filed	170	219	143	76
Motions Filed	30	15	3	12
Writs Filed (except Pro Se)	253	227	152	75
Writs Refused*	156	133	94	39
Writs Granted	71	46	23	23
Pro Se Writs Filed	153	147	4	143
Pro Se Writs Refused*	141	127	3	124
Pro Se Writs Granted	15	18	1	17
Appeals Dismissed/Transferred	16	17	16	1
Consolidated Opinions	0	5	5	0
Opinions Rendered **	146	208	120	88
Rehearings Acted Upon***	26	37	26	11
Appeals Pending	112	125	86	39
Argued But Not Decided	3	1	0	1
To Be Argued	109	124	86	38
Opinions Rendered Per Judge by Circuit	18	26	15	11
TOTAL FOR ALL CIRCUITS				
Appeals Filed	1,430	1,496	1,042	454
Motions Filed	108	128	64	64
Writs Filed (except Pro Se)	1,689	1,684	1,119	565
Writs Refused*	1,278	1,219	839	380
Writs Granted	369	334	210	124
Pro Se Writs Filed	1,026	962	64	898
Pro Se Writs Refused*	900	772	31	741
Pro Se Writs Granted	151	124	19	105
Appeals Dismissed/Transferred	153	176	154	22
Consolidated Opinions	48	66	58	8
Opinions Rendered **	1,296	1,293	887	406
Rehearings Acted Upon***	236	204	162	42
Appeals Pending	743	829	564	265
Argued But Not Decided	117	91	62	29
To Be Argued	626	738	502	236
Opinions Rendered Per Judge	24	24	17	8

* Includes writs denied, writs not considered, writs dismissed and transferred

** Includes opinions on appeals, writs, rehearings & supplemental opinions

*** Includes rehearings on writs



Number of Justices and Judges:	7	Supreme Court
	53	Courts of Appeal
	235	District, Family and Juvenile
	72	City and Parish Courts
	367	Total



DISTRICT COURTS

The trial court of general jurisdiction in Louisiana is the district court. District courts generally have authority to handle all civil and criminal cases.

Civil cases involve actions to enforce, correct, or protect private rights. In general, civil cases include all types of actions that are not criminal proceedings.

In a criminal proceeding, a person is charged with a crime and brought to trial and either found guilty or not guilty. The purpose of a criminal case is to punish the person who violates criminal laws.

District Courts are typically the level of court where judicial branch innovations find their broadest application. Drug Courts, Reentry Courts and other problem-solving courts are currently the most widespread examples of such innovations. There are 69 problem-solving courts spread throughout the state, with approximately 70 judges taking an active role in their operation. These programs require intensive judicial oversight of program participants in mandatory treatment, drug testing, employment, and educational activities and involve weekly staffing and court proceedings outside of a judge’s regular court duties. Judges handle specialty or problem-solving court dockets on a volunteer basis.

2023 District Court Stats

Louisiana District Courts reported a 9.24% increase in total filing for 2023, increasing from 507,494 total filings in 2022 to 554,407 total filings in 2023. Filings increased in all categories for 2023: Criminal filings increased 10.62%; juvenile filings increased by 7.77%; civil filings increased by 7.89%; traffic filings increased by 9.43%. Civil jury trials decreased in 2023, going from 160 jury trials in 2022 down to 131 jury trials in 2023. Criminal jury trials increased in 2023, going from 495 jury trials in 2022 up to 558 jury trials in 2023.



JUVENILE COURTS

The juvenile courts have exclusive jurisdiction over delinquency cases involving persons under 17 years of age, with the exception of felony offenses for which 15-16 year olds can be bound over to the district courts. Juvenile courts also handle adoption proceedings of children under the age of 17. Similarly, family courts have jurisdiction over all family matters ranging from delinquency proceedings to divorce and child custody proceedings. Act 654 passed during the 2018 regular session of the Louisiana Legislature went into effect in March 2019 and expanded juvenile court jurisdiction to include a child who commits a non-violent act and is under the age of 18, and a child who commits any delinquent act and is under the age of 18 (effective July 1, 2020).

2023 Juvenile Court Stats

Juvenile filings in Louisiana’s four specialized juvenile courts increased by 5.79% from 11,398 in 2022 to 12,058 in 2023.

LOUISIANA DISTRICT COURTS Two Year Trend in Activity

DISTRICT	PARISH	2022	2023	2023	2023	2023 ²	2023	JURY TRIALS	
		Total Filed	Juvenile Filed	Civil Filed	Criminal Filed	Traffic Filed	Total Filed	Civil	Criminal
1	Caddo ¹	13,924	361	6,082	6,420	864	13,727	6	61
	District Totals:	13,924	361	6,082	6,420	864	13,727	6	61
2	Bienville	4,200	63	309	480	3,685	4,537	0	0
	Claiborne	2,079	83	328	280	892	1,583	0	3
	Jackson	1,167	199	352	440	473	1,464	0	1
	District Totals:	7,446	345	989	1,200	5,050	7,584	0	4
3	Lincoln	7,041	599	778	1,382	4,375	7,134	1	1
	Union	2,503	188	756	1,042	944	2,930	1	1
	District Totals:	9,544	787	1,534	2,424	5,319	10,064	2	2
4	Morehouse	6,137	268	495	1,246	3,965	5,974	0	1
	Ouachita	26,114	1,819	5,921	12,240	19,131	39,111	2	10
	District Totals:	32,251	2,087	6,416	13,486	23,096	45,085	2	11
5	Franklin	2,314	279	644	953	742	2,618	0	1
	Richland	4,683	108	613	738	4,460	5,919	0	2
	West Carroll	1,190	119	313	370	464	1,266	0	0
	District Totals:	8,187	506	1,570	2,061	5,666	9,803	0	3
6	East Carroll	2,436	38	161	220	1,194	1,613	0	1
	Madison	7,009	71	223	1,197	5,508	6,999	0	1
	Tensas	2,139	23	109	468	1,670	2,270	0	0
	District Totals:	11,584	132	493	1,885	8,372	10,882	0	2
7	Catahoula	1,174	0	256	720	334	1,310	0	0
	Concordia	2,923	220	479	955	1,064	2,718	0	0
	District Totals:	4,097	220	735	1,675	1,398	4,028	0	0
8	Winn	1,157	51	264	382	447	1,144	0	2
	District Totals:	1,157	51	264	382	447	1,144	0	2
9	Rapides	10,439	736	3,184	2,721	4,335	10,976	5	18
	District Totals:	10,439	736	3,184	2,721	4,335	10,976	5	18
10	Natchitoches	6,547	898	886	1,075	5,055	7,914	3	5
	District Totals:	6,547	898	886	1,075	5,055	7,914	3	5
11	Sabine	2,388	188	490	422	640	1,740	1	3
	District Totals:	2,388	188	490	422	640	1,740	1	3
12	Avoyelles	6,471	357	1,460	2,352	2,649	6,818	0	6
	District Totals:	6,471	357	1,460	2,352	2,649	6,818	0	6
13	Evangeline	13,694	317	773	1,391	11,468	13,949	0	8
	District Totals:	13,694	317	773	1,391	11,468	13,949	0	8
14	Calcasieu	24,764	1,548	5,309	9,433	2,998	19,288	8	13
	District Totals:	24,764	1,548	5,309	9,433	2,998	19,288	8	13
15	Acadia	4,691	230	1,631	1,433	2,234	5,528	1	3
	Lafayette	17,765	1,944	7,299	3,875	3,845	16,963	9	7
	Vermilion	5,311	365	1,459	3,036	2,015	6,875	0	4
	District Totals:	27,767	2,539	10,389	8,344	8,094	29,366	10	14
16	Iberia	5,945	1,004	2,717	1,907	3,270	8,898	2	5
	St. Martin	7,790	219	1,336	1,268	7,422	10,245	1	4
	St. Mary	7,467	329	1,026	1,695	2,609	5,659	1	6
	District Totals:	21,202	1,552	5,079	4,870	13,301	24,802	4	15
17	Lafourche	12,487	530	2,786	4,669	7,315	15,300	1	17
	District Totals:	12,487	530	2,786	4,669	7,315	15,300	1	17
18	Iberville ³	4,221	181	1,083	1,024	1,685	3,973	2	4
	Pointe Coupee	2,077	92	567	577	1,329	2,565	0	3
	West Baton Rouge	3,846	116	908	940	1,728	3,692	2	3
	District Totals:	10,144	389	2,558	2,541	4,742	10,230	4	10
19	East Baton Rouge ¹	31,284	0	17,589	6,510	9,626	33,725	20	26
	District Totals:	31,284	0	17,589	6,510	9,626	33,725	20	26
20	East Feliciana	2,811	62	705	798	510	2,075	0	2
	West Feliciana	1,593	40	356	558	397	1,351	0	3
	District Totals:	4,404	102	1,061	1,356	907	3,426	0	5

LOUISIANA DISTRICT COURTS *Two Year Trend in Activity*

DISTRICT	PARISH	2022	2023	2023	2023	2023 ²	2023	JURY TRIALS	
		Total Filed	Juvenile Filed	Civil Filed	Criminal Filed	Traffic Filed	Total Filed	Civil	Criminal
21	Livingston	15,235	808	4,201	3,996	8,303	17,308	1	8
	St. Helena	1,643	76	310	409	1,263	2,058	0	0
	Tangipahoa	16,347	798	4,757	2,635	10,216	18,406	3	12
	District Totals:	33,225	1,682	9,268	7,040	19,782	37,772	4	20
22	St. Tammany	28,656	958	8,823	6,115	18,710	34,606	5	30
	Washington ⁴	3,937	266	1,324	1,385	1,118	4,093	1	13
	District Totals:	32,593	1,224	10,147	7,500	19,828	38,699	6	43
23	Ascension ¹	5,487	477	3,753	1,443	0	5,673	2	4
	Assumption	1,832	149	528	914	1,394	2,985	1	3
	St. James	2,900	111	793	568	1,733	3,205	1	3
	District Totals:	10,219	737	5,074	2,925	3,127	11,863	4	10
24	Jefferson ¹	19,888	0	13,749	7,144	0	20,893	17	98
	District Totals:	19,888	0	13,749	7,144	0	20,893	17	98
25	Plaquemines	5,209	71	739	750	3,601	5,161	0	5
	District Totals:	5,209	71	739	750	3,601	5,161	0	5
26	Bossier	18,902	800	3,242	7,205	7,570	18,817	2	6
	Webster	2,965	180	788	768	1,879	3,615	0	2
	District Totals:	21,867	980	4,030	7,973	9,449	22,432	2	8
27	St. Landry	19,154	634	2,207	7,729	8,612	19,182	2	14
	District Totals:	19,154	634	2,207	7,729	8,612	19,182	2	14
28	LaSalle	1,374	113	391	518	584	1,606	0	7
	District Totals:	1,374	113	391	518	584	1,606	0	7
29	St. Charles	21,508	448	2,358	710	21,720	25,236	0	1
	District Totals:	21,508	448	2,358	710	21,720	25,236	0	1
30	Vernon	6,335	191	1,151	978	4,800	7,120	0	3
	District Totals:	6,335	191	1,151	978	4,800	7,120	0	3
31	Jefferson Davis	3,700	150	799	885	2,803	4,637	2	0
	District Totals:	3,700	150	799	885	2,803	4,637	2	0
32	Terrebonne	17,490	417	3,694	3,637	11,251	18,999	5	12
	District Totals:	17,490	417	3,694	3,637	11,251	18,999	5	12
33	Allen	3,130	185	508	818	1,561	3,072	1	3
	District Totals:	3,130	185	508	818	1,561	3,072	1	3
34	St. Bernard	5,850	270	1,683	1,239	2,314	5,506	2	9
	District Totals:	5,850	270	1,683	1,239	2,314	5,506	2	9
35	Grant	3,751	188	731	1,194	1,710	3,823	0	4
	District Totals:	3,751	188	731	1,194	1,710	3,823	0	4
36	Beauregard	5,079	222	922	1,225	4,850	7,219	0	4
	District Totals:	5,079	222	922	1,225	4,850	7,219	0	4
37	Caldwell	1,524	38	334	537	406	1,315	0	2
	District Totals:	1,524	38	334	537	406	1,315	0	2
38	Cameron	6,975	50	166	528	1,706	2,450	0	3
	District Totals:	6,975	50	166	528	1,706	2,450	0	3
39	Red River	1,060	52	363	459	472	1,346	0	3
	District Totals:	1,060	52	363	459	472	1,346	0	3
40	St. John the Baptist	9,870	596	2,874	1,722	6,197	11,389	2	4
	District Totals:	9,870	596	2,874	1,722	6,197	11,389	2	4
42	DeSoto	3,204	99	995	961	5,823	7,878	2	8
	District Totals:	3,204	99	995	961	5,823	7,878	2	8
	Orleans Civil ¹	11,012	0	13,096	0	0	13,096	16	0
	Orleans Criminal ¹	3,696	0	0	3,862	0	3,862	0	72
	District Totals:	14,708	0	13,096	3,862	0	16,958	16	72
Statewide Totals:		507,494	21,992	144,926	135,551	251,938	554,407	131	558

1. Violations of Traffic, Misdemeanors, and/or Juvenile/Family Laws are Processed by Parish, City, and/or Juvenile/Family Courts.

2. DWI is included in the criminal totals beginning in 1990.

3. Amended their 2022 Civil Filings.

4. Amended their 2022 Juvenile Filings.

Louisiana Juvenile Courts

JUVENILE JUDICIAL ACTIVITY: FORMAL PROCESS – CALENDAR YEAR 2023

	CADD0			E. BATON ROUGE		
	Filings	Charges	Children ¹	Filings	Charges	Children ¹
Formal FINS	373	373	373	233	296	233
Juvenile Traffic	316	495	316	663	1,035	663
Juvenile Delinquency	892	1,810	892	867	1,544	867
Mental Incapacity to Proceed ²	8	8	8	0	0	0
Interstate compact for Juveniles	9	9	9	0	0	0
Contempt of Court	125	125	125	260	260	260
Child in Need of Care Cases	122		250	271		461
Voluntary Transfer of Custody	13		13	53		57
Jud. Certification of Children for Adoption Cases	12		18	37		50
Surrender of Parental Rights	72		72	43		40
Adoption	19		24	76		87
Child Support	642		850	0		0
Mental Health	47		47	11		11
Misdemeanor Prosecution of Adults /Other	1		1	25		31
Minor Marriages	1		1	0		0
Protection of Terminally Ill Children	0		0	0		0
Domestic Abuse	116		116	7		7
Other	854		854	117		148
Subtotal	3,622	2,820	3,969	2,663	3,135	2,915

1. The category of Children denotes the number of children listed in filed petitions for each case type.

2. Mental Incapacity to Proceed is a subset of the category of Delinquency. The event is enumerated separately as it is considered a significant delinquency event.

Family Court

FAMILY COURT FILINGS

EAST BATON ROUGE FAMILY COURT - 2023	
New Case Filings	5,448
Hearings and Trials	468
Pre-Rule, Pre-Trial, and Status Conferences	950
New Motions/Rules in Existing Cases	12,188
Judgments Filed	5,655

The Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish was originally established by the Louisiana Legislature under LA Acts 1990, No. 158 and is the only stand-alone family court in the state of Louisiana. The court consists of four judges who preside over matters including, but not limited to: divorces, community property division, spousal support, child visitation, child custody, child support, garnishments for spousal and child support, and domestic violence in the parish of East Baton Rouge.

JEFFERSON			ORLEANS			GRAND TOTAL		
Filings	Charges	Children ¹	Filings	Charges	Children ¹	Filings	Charges	Children ¹
150	289	150	90	138	90	846	1,096	846
799	1,332	798	107	222	107	1,885	3,084	1,884
563	1,240	562	1,299	4,220	1,423	3,621	8,814	3,744
29	29	29	0	0	0	37	37	37
0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9	9
87	87	87	0	0	0	472	472	472
374		374	217		217	984		1,302
80		80	21		21	167		171
46		46	0		0	95		114
6		6	1		1	122		119
68		68	51		52	214		231
885		0	0		0	1,527		850
0		0	0		0	58		58
0		0	0		0	26		32
1		1	0		0	2		2
0		0	0		0	0		0
0		0	4		4	127		127
700		700	195		195	1,866		1,897
3,788	2,977	2,901	1,985	4,580	2,110	12,058	13,512	11,895

CITY AND PARISH COURTS



The city courts are courts of record. This means that their decisions are reviewed on appeal on the record, as opposed to being tried anew in a higher court. City courts generally exercise concurrent jurisdiction with the district court in civil cases where the amount in controversy cannot exceed \$50,000. In criminal matters, they generally have jurisdiction over ordinance violations and misdemeanor violations of state law. City judges also handle a large number of traffic cases.

Louisiana's three parish courts are distinguishable from city courts only in that they are always staffed by full-time judges and their jurisdiction is a bit broader. Parish courts exercise jurisdiction in civil cases worth up to \$20,000 and criminal cases punishable by fines of \$1,000 or less, imprisonment of six months or less, or both. Cases are appealable from the parish courts directly to the courts of appeal.

2023 City & Parish Court Stats

Louisiana city and parish Courts filings increased by 7.42% from 404,966 filings in 2022 to 435,032 in 2023. In 2023, civil filings decreased by -3.40%, criminal filings increased by 2.07%, juvenile filings increased by 9.20%, and traffic filings by 11.82%.

LOUISIANA CITY AND PARISH COURTS Cases Processed Report Year 2023

CITY	Filed	Term.	Filed	Term.	Filed	Term.	Filed	Term.	Filed	Term.	Filed	Term.
	CIVIL		CRIMINAL		TRAFFIC*		JUVENILE		TOTAL CASES		OTHER PROCEEDINGS	
Abbeville	375	160	962	723	1,094	678	103	76	2,534	1,637	0	0
Alexandria	2,411	1,431	6,489	5,277	4,567	4,671	0	0	13,467	11,379	0	0
Ascension	672	241	2,347	2,236	6,964	6,165	507	419	10,490	9,061	0	0
Baker	507	740	480	267	1,131	1,147	0	0	2,118	2,154	0	0
Bastrop	419	259	586	511	2,156	1,665	0	0	3,161	2,435	0	0
Baton Rouge	6,057	6,054	6,799	6,405	57,522	52,521	0	0	70,378	64,980	16,667	19,678
Bogalusa	282	180	1,074	1,148	977	1,181	287	362	2,620	2,871	1,837	1,837
Bossier City	2,104	1,707	1,263	1,305	4,967	5,952	381	387	8,715	9,351	230	158
Breaux Bridge	345	263	133	118	160	156	47	14	685	551	87	125
Bunkie	79	77	44	40	362	362	3	3	488	482	0	0
Crowley	522	564	539	568	4,038	2,656	207	194	5,306	3,982	0	0
Denham Springs	2,869	1,747	552	448	3,914	3,658	311	249	7,646	6,102	0	0
Eunice	363	268	315	493	856	1,115	124	129	1,658	2,005	0	0
Franklin	273	89	413	267	1,544	1,153	93	20	2,323	1,529	0	0
Hammond	3,224	3,057	1,534	2,025	9,435	10,895	727	279	14,920	16,256	0	0
Houma	3,621	1,351	2,110	1,219	4,770	4,737	1,584	1,489	12,085	8,796	1,636	539
Jeanerette	59	99	114	119	3,769	3,761	86	118	4,028	4,097	0	0
Jeff. 1st Parish Ct.	3,887	4,294	2,899	2,241	31,972	28,768	0	0	38,758	35,303	0	0
Jeff. 2nd Parish Ct.	3,706	5,568	2,316	1,255	18,920	14,349	0	0	24,942	21,172	0	0
Jennings	378	342	625	291	6,911	4,671	33	26	7,947	5,330	0	0
Kaplan	53	45	735	612	672	654	119	90	1,579	1,401	0	0
Lafayette	3,937	4,037	2,276	2,053	15,916	13,348	787	698	22,916	20,136	961	961
Lake Charles	2,949	2,244	1,836	2,248	5,913	5,341	133	82	10,831	9,915	0	0
Leesville	179	76	412	214	853	540	139	32	1,583	862	0	0
Marksville	466	440	76	43	326	306	19	18	887	807	0	0
Minden	603	636	819	489	5,774	4,094	252	212	7,448	5,431	1	1
Monroe	2,622	0	926	605	4,037	2,204	331	102	7,916	2,911	0	0
Morgan City	479	281	1,212	1,825	4,410	4,567	280	276	6,381	6,949	0	0
Natchitoches	636	288	865	883	2,093	1,240	327	166	3,921	2,577	124	124
New Iberia	1,093	1,291	637	666	1,449	1,513	289	212	3,468	3,682	158	29
N.O. 1st City Ct.	8,847	5,390	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,847	5,390	0	0
N.O. 2nd City Ct.	2,090	1,422	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,090	1,422	0	0
N.O. Municipal	0	0	3,612	3,008	11,337	12,741	0	0	14,949	15,749	0	0
Oakdale	158	138	164	104	4,797	4,797	131	83	5,250	5,122	0	0
Opelousas	739	908	1,154	1,254	3,187	2,617	664	506	5,744	5,285	0	0
Pineville	600	613	2,899	936	2,707	2,421	0	0	6,206	3,970	116	0
Plaquemine	176	11	204	78	661	496	55	34	1,096	619	0	0
Port Allen	253	172	142	69	5,232	3,346	0	0	5,627	3,587	0	0
Rayne	388	365	21	34	1,167	1,757	38	29	1,614	2,185	0	0
Ruston	1,148	727	814	668	5,403	4,669	0	0	7,365	6,064	730	353
Shreveport	7,194	5,509	3,707	2,907	21,097	12,097	0	0	31,998	20,513	21,137	0
Slidell	2,119	2,117	4,290	3,087	5,766	3,666	974	891	13,149	9,761	2,633	2,633
Springhill	173	151	441	209	722	722	75	45	1,411	1,127	66	25
Sulphur	761	374	1,528	2,084	6,202	7,409	36	56	8,527	9,923	116	98
Thibodaux	538	944	724	913	2,036	2,019	248	241	3,546	4,117	0	0
Vidalia	24	12	104	41	1,096	515	27	5	1,251	573	0	0
Ville Platte	284	200	198	210	3,494	3,390	29	49	4,005	3,849	0	0
West Monroe	1,421	1,522	1,327	1,001	1,192	491	97	97	4,037	3,111	0	0
Winnfield	48	26	193	138	1,006	1,095	0	0	1,247	1,259	0	0
Winnsboro	250	120	338	315	293	253	74	59	955	747	0	0
Zachary	634	360	192	128	4,093	2,636	0	0	4,919	3,124	0	0
STATE TOTALS:	73,015	58,910	63,440	53,778	288,960	251,205	9,617	7,748	435,032	371,641	46,499	26,561

* Counts are per charge.

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