



2009

Rhode Island Report on the Judiciary 2009

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Rhode Island Judiciary 2009 ANNUAL REPORT



Justice Independence Honor

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Providence, Rhode Island 02903
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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

To the Honorable Members of the General Assembly:

I am pleased to present to you the 2009 Annual Report of the Rhode Island Judiciary, pursuant to G.L. 1956 (1997 Reenactment) § 8-15-7.



In July 2009, we welcomed a new Supreme Court Chief Justice – Paul A. Suttell. Chief Justice Suttell has taken the position of executive head of the Judiciary at a time when our state is facing serious financial difficulties. In these challenging times, we have strived to save and cut where possible. Nothing was considered too small a savings. As with the rest of state government, we only addressed critical needs in filling key positions.

This year's accomplishments and highlights included updating our technology, streamlining caseloads, refurbishment of our infrastructure, and education and public outreach. Our dedicated employees have continued to perform admirably despite budgetary and personnel cuts. We have maintained our quality of services throughout our courts. Although we may have delayed projects, restricted spending, and held positions open, the right to justice has not been compromised. We will continue to ensure that our services to the public are of the highest level of quality despite the current fiscal crisis.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Joseph Baxter, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

J. Joseph Baxter, Jr.
State Court Administrator

LETTER TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

To the Honorable Members of the General Assembly:

It is with pride that I present to you the Judiciary's first Annual Report since I became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in July 2009. It has been an interesting and challenging year. For many of us in state government, Rhode Island's fiscal crisis has been the driving force behind what we can – and cannot – do.

The judicial budget request for Fiscal Year 2010 was reduced by over \$5.5 million in general revenue funds. To meet the \$5.5 million target, the Judiciary reduced contract workers, delayed the computer refresh program, delayed the purchase of servers, and kept a minimum of 42 FTE positions vacant for the year. The availability of federal money is diminishing, leaving us with fewer options for some of our specialized programs.

The Judiciary will continue to do its part by sharing in the financial pain that all state agencies are experiencing. Unfortunately, the very nature of the poor economy tends to spur an increase in court cases across the board – criminal, civil, juvenile, and domestic. But in every crisis, there is opportunity. We will communicate with the executive and legislative branches to share our vision and goals, and we will involve all the stakeholders in the justice system to seek ideas that will not come with a huge price tag.

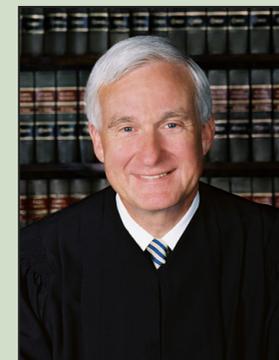
While some expenses are discretionary, we must keep in mind that justice is not discretionary. It is a pillar of society and the government. Our courts are places where people come to resolve their disputes. We must resist allowing our courts to be viewed as “a program.” We must keep an eye toward the public we serve and maintain the quality of services that the public has a right to expect.

I look forward to working with you in the days ahead to promote and create a better Rhode Island.

Yours sincerely,



Paul A. Suttell
Chief Justice



Constance Brown

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter of Transmittal	i
Letter to the General Assembly	iii
Table of Contents	v

THE COURTS

Supreme Court	2
Judicial Technology Center	3
Interpreters	4
Judicial Education and Mandatory Continuing Legal Education	5
State Law Library	5
Facilities and Operations	6
Judicial Records Center	7
Superior Court	8
Family Court	10
District Court	12
Workers' Compensation Court	14
Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal	16

JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE

At a Glance	20
Judiciary's Caseload Summary	21
Statistical Tables for all Courts	22

COURT STRUCTURE

Rhode Island Court Structure	42
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THE COURTS





The Rhode Island Supreme Court, with Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell, seated, and standing, left to right, Justice William P. Robinson III, Justice Maureen McKenna Goldberg, and Justice Francis X. Flaherty.

SUPREME COURT

Community Outreach and Public Relations

The Office of Community Outreach and Public Relations assists the Chief Justice and the court administration in promoting access to justice through user-friendly courts, community outreach, education, quality court services, and accountability. The office continued to work with the state Department of Education to attend career fairs and to offer informative programs about the courts to public and private schools throughout the state. The office administers the Judiciary's court education program "Justice Rules" with a K-12 curriculum to teach children about the basic principles of the legal system; to cultivate positive attitudes about the third branch of government; and to promote interest in careers in the Judiciary.

In 2009, the office expanded its outreach to include more scouting groups and began the transition to assume direction of the Judiciary's "Summer Institutes on the Courts" program, which brings teachers into the courts for week-long seminars on behalf of the Rhode Island Legal/Educational Partnership. This program serves from 60 to 100 teachers each summer. The office partners with the state Department of Children, Youth, and Families, the Public Defender, the Attorney General, the Child Advocate, the Department of Corrections, and the Wyatt Detention Center for this annual program.

The office also continued its annual outreach with the Naval War College in Newport, and initiated what promises to become a regular relationship with the United States Military Academy at West Point. The Supreme Court continued its regular practice of "riding the circuit" to conduct oral arguments of actual cases in the outlying cities and towns. In 2009, the court sat in East Providence at East Providence High School.

Appellate Mediation Program

The Appellate Mediation Program saw a 20 percent increase in the number of new cases in 2009, as well as an increase in the number of retired judges who serve as mediators. Eleven mediator-justices are available to provide services to the program. Notwithstanding the increase in cases this year, the program sustained its resolution rate near 45 percent and maintained its highest satisfaction rate for two years in a row since its inception in 2003.

Law Clerk Department

For 2009, the Law Clerk Department had another productive term. The department of 15 law clerks worked on approximately 154 Superior Court trial assignments in addition to its work with motion calendars, special calendars, the Family and District Courts, and the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Appeals Panel. Overall, the law clerks provide legal research and writing assistance to the various trial courts of the Rhode Island Judiciary. Such assignments encompass civil, criminal, and administrative matters.

At the outset of the judicial term, the law clerks participated in a comprehensive orientation program, which is now held during the week before the fall term. Also, the Law Clerk Department has continued its use of interns from summers to the entire year. Students are from different law schools and receive course credit for various internships during the academic year. Expansion of the Law Clerk Department intern program has effectively increased the production. Additionally, monthly department meetings to review new case law, discuss legal topics, and review procedures are continuing to be held at each of the courthouses. These meetings have also been expanded to include more judges as speakers as well as actual presentations in the courtrooms. Finally, a more comprehensive and computerized case tracking system has now been instituted in the Law Clerk Department. This new, improved system has proven most efficient in the processing of assignments and the tracking of case files.

The overall goal of the Department remains twofold. The Law Clerk Department strives to maintain a well-trained staff of law clerks to assist the Judiciary with legal research and writing requests. At the same time, the Law Clerk Department provides law school graduates with an opportunity to learn about the Rhode Island Judiciary and to gain experience with diverse areas of the law.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF STATE COURTS

Judicial Technology Center

The Judicial Technology Center's (JTC) focus in 2009 was on upgrading existing infrastructure and implementing new technologies. At the Garrahy Judicial Complex, a new uninterruptible power supply and hardware racks were installed in the computer room, which houses the numerous servers and networking equipment that support the Judiciary.

The JTC developed and installed a new system for the Jury Commissioner's Office to manage jury pools. Because this application was developed by and is owned by the Judiciary, there will be no ongoing maintenance fees associated with this system. This new approach is expected to greatly reduce expenses.

The Appellate Mediation Program was added to the Judiciary's case management system in January, and the Office of Court Interpreters was added in December. Previously, statistics from those departments had been manually calculated. Also, an interface was developed between the courts and the Department of the Attorney General to allow for the smooth electronic transfer of restraining orders to law enforcement.

The JTC expanded the use of digital recording technology in 2009 with the addition of several Family Court courtrooms. Some Superior Court courtrooms and all District Court and Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal courtrooms were outfitted with this technology in prior years. Digital recording preserves a higher quality voice record of court proceedings. It will not deteriorate over time as will older analog technology. Specific areas of testimony can be isolated for playback, and the full record of the proceeding can be "attached" to the case management record. Duplication of these new recordings is as simple as burning a CD on a computer.

In 2009, the Judiciary continued to work with the state Division of Taxation to intercept income tax refunds headed toward people who owe the courts money. The Judiciary collected \$408,929 from the tax intercept program and collected \$94,875 in sales of data and reports.

Interpreters

In 2009, the Office of Court Interpreters (OCI) collaborated with other departments in the courts on the design and creation of two projects: an interpreters' page within the Judiciary's website; and a new statistical data collection system. The interpreters' webpage includes information on the difference between a bilingual person and a court interpreter, the interpreters' Code of Ethics – which contains sections on impartiality, confidentiality, and professional standards – and how a court interpreter may be reached when a court user needs one. All that information has been translated and published in Spanish and it will be translated into other frequently used languages in the near future.

The second project, a new statistical data collection system, was recently implemented to improve and streamline the OCI's data collection. The OCI will now be able to produce more detailed statistical reports on interpretation services in specific areas within the courts.

The year 2009 marked the fifth year of providing interpreting services in a wide range of court cases. In 2009, the OCI assisted approximately 7,000 court users in criminal and civil matters. Collaboration continued with the Community College of Rhode Island in providing guidance and internship opportunities to the students of the school's Bilingual Judicial Interpreter Program.

Judicial Education and Mandatory Continuing Legal Education

The Supreme Court's Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Commission's Chairman, Justice William P. Robinson III, and its Executive Director, Holly Hitchcock, M.Ed., were honored when Ms. Hitchcock was invited to represent the Commission at the nationwide Continuing Legal Education (CLE) "Critical Issues Summit: Equipping Our Lawyers: Law School Education, Continuing Education, and Legal Practice in the 21st Century." The summit gathered 200 legal education scholars from law schools, CLE regulatory bodies, law firms, and CLE program providers for a four-day meeting. Attendees examined global changes to the practice of law and drafted recommendations for legal education programming to meet the evolving needs of practitioners. The results of the summit will be published in 2010.

The MCLE Commission responded to an increase in its annual service constituency topping 5,000 attorneys. Through its outreach efforts in 2009, the Commission saw a marked increase in overall compliance exemplified by a 33 percent decline in the number of non-compliance notices issued. As well, new lawyer orientation, online access to forms, web-based courses, and MCLE compliance counseling has strengthened participation in continuing legal education.

The Education Office served all the Judiciary's justices, judges, and magistrates who attended the court's annual judicial conferences held in March, June, and September. A broad range of topics was selected to further the excellence of judicial service for our citizens. Local and national speakers presented on subjects including: Contempt, Gangs in Rhode Island, Electronic Frontiers in Litigation, Fraud, Anticipating Problems in the Courtroom, and Concepts of Justice in Literature.

State Law Library

The typical serene atmosphere of the State Law Library was punctuated in 2009 by the sounds of hammers and the aroma of paint during a major renovation project. Thanks to a generous grant from the Champlin Foundations, falling plaster and peeling paint have been replaced and the wood and brass have been polished. As envisioned by the Providence County Courthouse Commission in 1933, the courthouse was designed "not as a place of splendor, but rather one of quiet dignity." The library, with its renovation completed, indeed reflects that vision.

While the physical environment embodies the best of the past, adapting to and embracing the technologies of the future are evident in library operations. The library has joined the Higher Education Library Information Network (HELIN), a consortium of research libraries in Rhode Island that share a common catalog and underlying mission. More than a just a catalog, the database provides interactive, integrated access to information. The Judiciary and attorneys in Rhode Island have access to the vast information depositories available at prestigious colleges and universities. With the click of a key, materials from other libraries can be accessed, requested, and then delivered through the statewide

delivery system. This technology partnership elevates awareness of the law library's valuable and unique collection and brings Rhode Island one step closer to seamless statewide access.

Difficult economic conditions motivate the library staff to secure the best research materials available and to maintain the integrity of the collection. At the same time, frugal decisions have been made to avoid unnecessary duplication and to implement cost-saving measures. Price, value, and usage are important considerations when making collection development decisions. The continued superior service by the library staff has offset many of these difficult budget restraints.

The library has enhanced its partnership with Office of Community Outreach and Public Relations in the Justice Rules Program. Over 30 classes and 600 students participated in classes that acquaint school children and young adults with the judicial process. The library is given the opportunity to showcase its unique resources, enrich the lives of students, promote positive attitudes toward the judicial system, and cultivate interest in law-related careers.

Facilities and Operations

Although staffing is currently down by 29 percent, the Facilities and Operations/ Security Office had a constructive year in 2009. Many capital projects were completed as well as daily operations improved through efficiency. With the opening of two new courthouses, the office has greatly changed over the past few years and has taken on greater responsibilities. The two new facilities are state-of-the-art in terms of technology for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), security, and operational functions. When the new facilities were opened, demand for the same type of systems was requested in the existing courthouses. Security and HVAC led the way with the most changes.

Security and safety were greatly improved in 2009 with the installation of monitored intrusion alarm systems, upgrading and adding cameras in public areas, adding digital voice recorders, upgrading fire alarm systems, installing new fire alarm panels, and replacing the antiquated halon systems with wet systems. Courthouse construction this past year included replacement of two of the public elevators at the Garrahy Judicial Complex, repair and renovation of the clock tower at the Licht Judicial Complex, repair and renovation of the cupola at the Murray Judicial Complex, and the Kent County Courthouse drainage problem in the garage was corrected. The garage was also retrofitted with energy efficient fixtures.

The office continues to make great strides in HVAC. Improvements in the HVAC systems in the courthouses have yielded significant savings in operational costs. The office continues to develop a long-term plan with engineers to improve the air quality at the Garrahy Judicial Complex by initiating performance studies, implementing the recommendations, and planning projects over the next several fiscal years.

In the telecommunications arena, the telephone lines at all building have been verified and are maintained in-house. This resulted in a savings of thousands of dollars and improving down time. The accounts payable section continues to review all invoices and make sure all billing is correct before processing. The bills are processed with 24 hours of receipt as long as they are billed at the correct rate.

Judicial Records Center

The Judicial Records Center (JRC) provides secure storage for the semi-active, inactive, and archival records of the Rhode Island Judiciary. The JRC also provides efficient reference services for the courts, members of the bar, and members of the public who require court records for research purposes.

In 2009, the JRC accessioned 146,746 case files in 6,553 boxes. The JRC now stores over 4,797,311 case files in 89,485 cubic foot boxes and 5,124 manuscript court docket, minute, and record books. The JRC staff responded to over 74,000 requests for records during the year. These included over 37,000 individual records that were viewed at the JRC. Staff also provided access to an additional 17,000 case files for researchers for credit agencies and social policy institutes.

There were over 10,400 archival requests for the pre-1900 court records in 2009. These include requests from genealogists as well as graduate students, lawyers, and professional historians. Particularly noteworthy this year was the publication by Northern Illinois University Press of *To Bring Law Home: The Federal Judiciary in Early National Rhode Island* by Professor D. Kurt Graham. In this book, Dr. Graham uses court and bar records from the judicial archives, as well as federal court records, to explore the development of the bar and the judiciary in colonial and early federal Rhode Island. He demonstrates that the federal judicial system was readily accepted in Rhode Island, and argues that the federal judicial system exerted a significant nationalizing influence on the citizens and states of the new American nation. Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Gordon Wood praises *To Bring Law Home* as "a superb, well-written, and much needed study of the early federal judiciary" and labels the book as "a model of historical scholarship." Striking a similar note, legal historian David Konig states that the book "fills a major gap in the scholarship of the Early Republic" and "expands our understanding of law and the legal profession at a formative point in our history."

The successful completion of two grant projects from the Rhode Island Foundation has significantly enhanced the preservation of the archival court records and further increased the accessibility of the court records to scholars. Under the auspices of the first grant, 66 court record books dating from 1671 through 1800 were microfilmed, and four of these books received conservation treatment. Simultaneously, archives staff flat-filed 25,000 colonial court case files in archival folders and boxes. The Supreme Court was also awarded a third grant from the Rhode Island Foundation that will provide for constructing custom-fitted archival phase-boxes to help preserve 260 manuscript court record books dating from 1671 through 1900.



Bottom - Left to right: Judith C. Savage, Patricia A. Hurst, Robert D. Krause, Alice Bridget Gibney (Presiding Justice), Melanie Wilk Thunberg, Francis J. Darigan, Jr., Michael A. Silverstein, and Edward C. Clifton.
Second Row - Left to right: Jeffrey A. Lanphear, Susan E. McGuirl, Stephen P. Nugent, O. Rogeriee Thompson, Netti C. Vogel, Gilbert V. Indeglia, Edwin J. Gale, Daniel A. Procaccini, and Allen P. Rubine.
Top - Left to right: Patrick T. Burke, Patricia L. Harwood, Brian P. Stern, Bennett R. Gallo, William E. Carnes, Jr., Kristin E. Rodgers, William J. McAtee, and Gordon M. Smith.
Not pictured: Susan L. Revens

SUPERIOR COURT

Master Civil Calendar Call

Beginning on October 26, 2009 the Superior Court conducted five separate Master Calendar calls of 1,068 civil cases designated “ready” for trial, which were attended by hundreds of attorneys. Cases were meted out to six judges who were assigned the task of conferencing each case: determining the trial attorneys, the number of trial days and witnesses, issues unique to the case, and the exact posture of the case in terms of trial readiness and settlement potential. The information gathered was assessed with the assistance and coordinated efforts of personnel from the Clerk’s, Arbitration, and Administration offices. Trials of these cases beginning with the oldest case began in January 2010. As of March 31, 2010, 435 files, or 40%, were closed.

Civil Settlement Week

In December 2009, the Superior Court conducted its annual Settlement Week. Volunteer attorneys mediated 221 cases of which 117 were settled for a 53 percent success rate. Also, another 15 cases were expected to settle, which will ultimately result in a 60 percent success rate.

Medical Malpractice Mediation

The Superior Court has approximately 450 medical malpractice cases pending statewide. Inherent in these types of cases are unique scheduling problems which, historically, have accounted for expenditures of time and resources of both bench and bar.

In order to move these cases more efficiently through the pretrial process, the Superior Court has initiated a new procedure by which all scheduling issues will be addressed by a single justice.

The cases will be conferenced with all counsel to establish realistic timelines for completion of fact and expert discovery. The progress of all cases will be monitored, and when it is determined that a case is ready for meaningful settlement discussion, it will be forwarded to mediation. Likewise, when a case is ready for trial, the case will be referred to the appropriate trial calendar for assignment.

It is expected that this new procedure will be cost effective for counsel and litigants alike. Also, it is expected that there will be a valuable saving of time for counsel and the court.

Adult Drug Court

The Rhode Island Adult Drug Court provides a mechanism for nonviolent felony offenders suffering from addiction to be referred to the appropriate level of substance abuse counseling and ultimately adopt a drug-free lifestyle. In 2009, the Adult Drug Court continued to evolve with over 175 active participants and 100 people being actively reviewed at any given time.

Eight years of operation have resulted in impressive and measurable successes in changing the course of many lives that may have otherwise been lost to a lifetime of drug or alcohol addiction. Defendants must comply with rigid terms and conditions set forth in the Adult Drug Court contract. The Adult Drug Court has proudly graduated 210 individuals who, among other accomplishments, have returned to school, gained meaningful employment, and re-established family connections, elements lost through their substance addiction.

Gun Court

The Rhode Island Gun Court, which heard its first case on September 12, 1994, has been a tremendous success, emulated by as many as 20 other jurisdictions. All Providence/Bristol County criminal cases with firearms charges as specified in G.L. 1956 § 8-2-15.1 are assigned to the Gun Court. Trial is then scheduled within 60 days of the completion of discovery.

The dramatic impact on the prosecution of gun crimes is seen in the reduction of the disposition time, from an average of 18 months to merely four months from the case filing date. In 2009, 195 cases were disposed on the Gun Court calendar, with an average disposition rate of 205 days. In addition, 1,411 jail terms have been imposed since the program’s inception, and 95 percent of cases result in the imposition of a sentence.



Bottom - Left to right: John A. Mutter, Kathleen A. Voccola, Raymond E. Shawcross, Jeremiah S. Jeremiah, Jr. (Chief Judge), Haiganush R. Bedrosian, Michael B. Forte, and Francis J. Murray, Jr.

Top - Left to right: Jeanne L. Shepard, George N. DiMuro, Edward H. Newman, Thomas Wright, Patricia K. Asquith, Stephen J. Capineri, Laureen D'Ambra, Debra E. DiSegna, and Armando Monaco, II.

Not pictured: Angela M. Paulhus, John J. O'Brien, Jr., Colleen M. Hastings, and John McCann.

FAMILY COURT

National Adoption Day

The Family Court welcomed 225 people and hosted a very special event on November 21, 2009 in recognition of the 6th Annual National Adoption Day. Rhode Island's celebration coincided with events being held across the United States on this day to draw attention to the adoption process and the large number of children available for adoption. The court finalized 18 adoptions with 16 different families. The celebration was supported by many sponsors and community agencies.

Child Support Collections

The Rhode Island Family Court Child Support/Collections Office collected \$82,783,812.27 for the calendar year 2009, with an average of \$290,000.00 in daily receipts. During the 2009 calendar year, the Family Court magistrates heard 22,926 child support cases. The office continues to increase the amount of electronic fund transfers and is looking to partner with the Department of Human Services and the State of Connecticut to streamline all check processing.

Court Appointed Special Advocate

The Office of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) enters its 31st year of operation with 200 sworn volunteers advocating for the neglected and abused children statewide in the custody of the Rhode Island Department of Children,

Youth, and Families (DCYF). CASA volunteers are members of the community who step forward to be a voice for children in state care; volunteers undergo a 30-hour course of training and are asked to give an 18-month commitment to the CASA program.

The CASA volunteers assist the full-time staff of 10 lawyers, five social caseworkers, and four support staff in representing approximately 3,000 children in the care of DCYF. Together the CASA staff and volunteers work to ensure that each child in state custody has a voice in the proceedings before the Family Court.

Supervised Visitation

The mediation program continued its success with the expansion to all counties last year. More than two-thirds of the cases referred to mediation are resolved without the need for a contested court hearing. Cases involving custody, visitation, and child support are now referred to a mediator within 24 hours, with the goal of engaging the litigants before the next court hearing. The Family Court began mediating miscellaneous cases in Providence County in 1997 and has been expanding the mediation model ever since. The ultimate goal is to allow all parties to address their issues and work together in being part of the solution.

The Rhode Island Family Court Juvenile Justice Reform

In 2009, the Family Court joined forces with RI Kids Count and the Anne E. Casey Foundation to address Juvenile Justice Reform. The Family Court is working with collateral Rhode Island partners to reduce reliance on secure confinement and find alternative ways to address developmentally appropriate interventions.

Rhode Island has formally agreed to take part in the Casey Foundation's nationally recognized program called the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). Rhode Island joined approximately 25 other states in replicating a proven model to reduce the reliance of highly secure detention settings.

Other goals through the JDAI efforts will include the reduction of disproportionate minority contact, the increase of family interventions and community collaborations, and the implementation of highly attuned policies to address developmental needs. It is the Family Court's hope that this initiative will continue the court's mission for juvenile rehabilitation while maintaining safety for the individual and community.



Bottom - Left to right: Elaine T. Bucci, Stephen P. Erickson, Michael A. Higgins (Acting Chief Judge), Frank J. Cenerini, and Madeline Quirk.

Top - Left to right: Joseph P. Ippolito, Jr., Mary E. McCaffrey, Raphael Ovalles, Jeanne E. LaFazia, William C. Clifton, Pamela Woodcock Pfeiffer, Anthony Capraro, Jr., and Christine S. Jabour.

Not pictured: Joseph T. Houlihan, Jr.

DISTRICT COURT

Bail Project

In 2009, the District Court Clerk's Office undertook a project to evaluate all monies being held by the court for bail in cases which have been adjudicated and in cases where warrants had issued because the defendant failed to appear. A plan of action was formulated in conjunction with the Supreme Court Finance and Budget Office.

Each case was evaluated and monies were directed into three categories: \$746,276 was turned over to the General Treasurer as unclaimed property; \$725,492 was used to pay fines and costs owed by the defendant (which funds are also turned over to the Treasurer's Office); and \$353,219 was forfeited to the State because the defendant failed to appear and a warrant was outstanding.

These special revenues to the state were accomplished at a cost of approximately \$10,000 in data entry overtime.

Special Small Claims Calendar

As 2009 began, a local law firm advised the District Court to expect an extraordinary number of small claims cases to be filed this year on behalf of certain credit card companies which it represented. In response, a special calendar was established at the Kent County Courthouse to handle this influx so that the regular small claims calendars throughout the State would not be disrupted.

The special calendar remained active until late 2009, when the number of filings abated. In all, approximately 4,400 small claims cases were handled expeditiously on the special calendar and an additional 1,000 civil cases were processed by the calendar project team.

RONCO Upgrade Installed

The District Court and the Judicial Technology Center installed an important upgrade to its communications link with the Restraining Order, No-Contact Order system known as RONCO, which is maintained by the Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI) unit of the Department of the Attorney General. Since its inception, the District Court had notified RONCO of the issuance or withdrawal of a Restraining or No-Contact Order by facsimile. This system was prone to problems with legibility and timeliness. Under the new system, court personnel enter such information directly into the court's database and RONCO is electronically notified immediately.

Online Payment System

Throughout the year, District Court personnel were working diligently with the Judicial Technology Center and the Supreme Court Finance and Budget Office to design and install an online payment system for fines, fees, and costs. At year's end, the Judiciary had developed a relationship with a vendor and the project was entering the final design, programming, and testing phase.

District Court Welcomes Associate Judge Joseph T. Houlihan, Jr.

During 2009, the District Court welcomed a new Associate Judge, the Honorable Joseph T. Houlihan, Jr. of Portsmouth. Judge Houlihan, who is a 1987 graduate of Boston College and a 1991 graduate of the Boston College Law School, began his legal career in 1992 with the Department of the Attorney General where he served as a Special Assistant Attorney General, prosecuting cases before the District, Family, and Superior Courts and handling appeals before Supreme Court. From 1996 until his appointment, he practiced law with the firm of Houlihan, Managhan & Kyle, LLP, concentrating in domestic law and criminal defense.



Bottom - Left to right: Janette A. Bertness, Debra L. Olsson, George E. Healy, Jr. (Chief Judge), Bruce Q. Morin, and Edward P. Sowa, Jr.

Top - Left to right: Robert E. Hardman, Jr., George T. Salem, Jr., Dianne M. Connor, Hugo L. Ricci, and Robert M. Ferrieri.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT

Under Rhode Island law, the provisions of the Rhode Island Workers' Compensation Act are a necessary condition of every contract of employment entered into in our state. If an employee is hired in Rhode Island or suffers a work-related injury here, the compensation law is triggered to provide benefits while the injured employee remains disabled. The court's role is to resolve any disputes arising out of such injuries whether it addresses the liability for the claim, the nature of the injury sustained, or the extent of the disability. The basic jurisdictional component then focuses upon the employment relationship.

Since less people are working in the state, it is entirely logical that less work-related injuries occur. Where the severe economic conditions have devolved to the point that unemployment is near record high, the number of cases filed at the court would naturally decline. As anticipated, the total number of filings in 2009 declined by 7 percent. Another phenomenon caused by the severe economic downturn is the reduction of reported injuries by those employees who remain working. Fear about the response to such reports and a perception that a work-related injury could jeopardize the employment relationship tends to depress the number of injury claims and, therefore, the number of cases filed with the court. Ironically, since many of these cases will ultimately result in disability and litigation, the number of petitions seeking to affix liability for a work-related injury will ultimately rise in upcoming years.

The current reduction in filings has no effect upon the court's mission to improve efficiency or to increase outreach efforts. To the contrary, the judges and staff of the court are acutely aware of the economic drain upon the injured worker and remain committed to provide the most efficient dispute resolution system possible. As in the past, the court readily acknowledges that the success of its mission is due to the dedication and efficiency of the court's staff. Consistent with the demands of the budget, staff vacancies have not been filled and every unit in the court is working with a reduced complement. Such reductions have imposed greater burdens upon those who remain and the staff has responded with its usual devotion. Their dedication to the court's mission and their commitment to provide the most efficient service to the litigants who seek assistance is inspiring. The entire staff remains dedicated to its duty to provide the highest quality service to the citizens of our state. Cases are received for filing, registered in the data system, and processed for hearing with the utmost efficiency.

Although the total number of filings has declined and the cases being managed are more complex than at any other point in the court's history, the same level of efficiency has been maintained. A greater percentage of cases were closed, 75.3 percent, at the pretrial conference than at any other time in the past. This is an increase of more than 2 percent over the prior year and represents the highest statistical point yet recorded. The time frames for closure at pretrial have remained remarkably consistent over the last two years. Most significantly, more than 90 percent of the cases were resolved by the court at the pretrial level within 90 days of filing. It is even more remarkable that more than 70 percent of all cases were closed by the court within 60 days of the date they were filed. Since it has long been recognized that a delay in resolving contested compensation cases generates additional litigation, the court's efficiency in hearing and deciding these contested cases serves to maintain the entire caseload at a reasonable level.

As in past years, the court and its staff continue to be active in the Judiciary's diverse outreach programs. The judges and staff voluntarily appear at school job fairs and other educational forums to discuss the judicial process and the workers' compensation system. We have often appeared on weekends or after hours on Hispanic radio or at immigrant community forums to reinforce the principle that our government is committed to serve all who seek its help and that fluency in English is not a prerequisite for justice.

The court's YES-RI program remains the keystone of its outreach efforts. Since this program was announced in 2005, members of the compensation bar and safety professionals have joined with representatives of the court to visit young workers in school and outreach programs to discuss their right to a safe work place and their entitlement to a workers' compensation benefit in the event that they are injured while working. In 2009, the court's YES-RI program visited 20 schools and educated more than 2,000 young people. We believe that this program not only educates these students but also empowers them and demonstrates that the Judiciary is committed to serving all who need our help.



Left to right: Albert Ciullo, R. David Cruise, Lillian M. Almeida, William R. Guglietta (Chief Magistrate), Domenic DiSandro, III, William T. Noonan, Alan R. Goulart, and Edward C. Parker.

RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL

The calendar year 2009 posed many challenges for the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal (RITT). With an enormous state budget deficit, the RITT was asked to do “more with less.” Due to the budget constraints, the RITT operated with 10 percent fewer employees to handle the volume that comes before the court.

For the sixth straight year, the court heard over 100,000 violations (104,395). In addition to these filings, the court also heard over 3,500 motion hearings and handled over 4,000 show cause hearings. The court’s Appellate Division heard 150 traffic and municipal court appeals and 282 appeals for the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Despite the large number of cases filed with the court during 2009, the RITT was able to dispose of over 109,000 violations, representing 103 percent of the cases that were filed. This continues the trend of the RITT disposing of more cases than are filed within a calendar year.

The court continued to be a major contributor to the general revenue fund for the State of Rhode Island. In calendar year 2009, the court collected nearly \$12 million that was deposited as general revenue. This represents over 81 percent of the costs that were assessed during the calendar year. This 81 percent figure is one of the highest rates for collections of traffic courts in the nation. In conjunction with the Department of Revenue, the RITT was also a major contributor in the State of Rhode Island’s Tax Intercept Program, collecting over \$419,000.

The RITT’s large contribution to the general revenue fund was based upon 14,000 less cases being filed in 2009, a 13 percent reduction from 2008. Despite the reduction in the number of cases presented to the court, the RITT was still able to collect nearly 95 percent of the revenue it had collected from the previous year.

Several judicial functions were expanded to assist the court in handling the thousands of citizens appearing on its calendars. In 2009, the RITT expanded

the accessibility of the Associate Judges and Magistrates to the public by creating a miscellaneous “2A” calendar. This calendar allows any “walk-in” motorist to have access to a Judge or Magistrate during the working hours of the court. The RITT also restructured its website and telephone payment processes, which reduced costs to the motorists. An automated teller machine was installed in the main concourse of the courthouse so that motorist would have access to funds to enable them to pay their fines and costs at the court.

Additionally, the RITT played an increasing role in providing services to the community. Many Associate Judges and Magistrates of the court participated in numerous training programs offered by the Rhode Island State Police Training Academy and the Municipal Police Training Academy. These included presentations on court procedure as well as a moot court demonstration on motor vehicle violations. The court was also a host to a Mothers Against Drunk Driving Annual Holiday Prevention Kick-off, which was attended by members of law enforcement, victims of drunken driving accidents, and AAA of Rhode Island.

The RITT continued to expand its relationships with the municipal courts of the cities and towns of our state. The RITT gave a presentation at the Municipal Court Judges’ Association Annual Meeting. This was a continuing legal educational seminar where there was an opportunity to meet with all the municipal court judges to discuss practice and procedures of those courts. The expansion of this relationship will provide more uniformity and continuity in the administration of justice between these two court systems.

The RITT has continued to implement the E-Citation program. In 2009, the Pawtucket and Richmond Police Departments joined the State Police, Burrillville, East Providence, Narragansett, North Kingstown, and Portsmouth as E-Citation agencies. In calendar year 2009, 47,298 E-Citations were issued. E-Citations provide great benefits to all parties, police, motorists and the courts. E-Citations are much clearer for the motorists to read and the “Know Your Rights” pamphlet is pre-printed on the back of each ticket providing valuable information to the motorist. E-Citations also eliminate redundancy of data entry efforts, validate summons information at the time of the initial stop, improves the accuracy of information, and automates the return of disposition information from the court to the police departments, eliminating the need for data reentry.

The RITT has been implementing IBM FileNet Enterprise Content Management System (ECM). An integrated data entry application was implemented to allow for case entry using the scanned copy of the summons. This enhancement backfills the information where available and greatly improves the capabilities of the data entry staff and data quality. The RITT scanned over 284,000 documents consisting of over 1.5 million images. The staff has completed scanning cases with outstanding balances back to 1999, as well as keeping current with new case scanning. As a result, operational efficiency has greatly improved and allows the RITT to be more responsive to public inquiries.



JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE



AT A GLANCE

SUMMARY OF JUDICIAL BUDGETS

Description	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010 Enacted
Supreme Court Operations	25,210,653	23,993,244	24,678,116
Defense of Indigents	3,369,184	3,345,627	3,365,689
Superior Court Operations	18,168,360	17,928,481	18,257,677
Jury Operations	1,466,820	1,441,642	1,603,631
Family Court	18,016,573	17,416,346	18,151,560
District Court	9,625,764	9,983,612	10,175,958
Traffic Tribunal	6,834,964	7,456,121	7,545,676
Judicial Tenure and Discipline	107,533	97,166	128,922
General Revenue Total	82,799,851	81,662,239	83,907,229
Supreme Court	250,106	212,785	102,440
Superior Court	154,540	85,303	90,000
Family Court	1,467,948	1,328,486	1,253,012
Federal Funds Total	1,872,594	1,626,574	1,445,452
Supreme Court	1,188,446	1,252,257	1,302,005
Superior Court	-	-	287,000
District Court	-	264,916	639,193
Workers' Compensation Court	7,205,888	7,279,316	7,578,922
Restricted Receipts Total	8,394,334	8,796,489	9,807,120
Supreme Court	1,438,736	1,704,163	825,000
Other Funds Total	1,438,736	1,704,163	825,000
Grand Total	94,505,515	93,789,465	95,984,801
Percent of State Budget	1.77%	1.44%	1.23%
Percent of State Budget General Fund	2.43%	2.72%	2.80%

REVENUE DATA

Description	Type	FY 2009	Calendar Year 2009
Supreme Court	Fees	14,377	14,817
Superior Court	Fines	89,321	88,686
	Fees	1,640,279	1,595,419
Family Court	Fees	479,545	483,163
District Court	Fines	2,850,618	2,676,996
	Fees	2,097,345	2,211,008
Traffic Tribunal	Fines	12,103,251	11,554,585
Probation and Parole	Fines	1,666,788	1,736,017
Warrant Fees	Fines	511,924	531,754
Writ of Execution	Fees	181,858	182,754
Miscellaneous Judicial Revenue	Miscellaneous	709,203	707,331
Domestic Violence Fines	Fines	52,437	52,416
Sex Offenders Fines	Fines	1,560	1,545
Department of Health	Fines	387,638	406,694
State Fire Marshal	Fines	1,250	250
Total General Fund		22,787,395	22,243,435
Department of Labor and Training	Fines	153,240	151,690
Disciplinary Counsel	Fees	1,709,635	1,180,915
Department of Environmental Management	Fines	371	555
Violent Crimes Compensation	Fines	1,598,992	1,716,793
Total Restricted Receipt		3,462,238	3,049,953
Rhode Island Legal Services	Fees	96,723	93,086
Municipalities	Fines	1,965,397	1,960,131
Other Total		2,062,121	2,053,217
Grand Total		28,311,754	27,346,605

AT A GLANCE continued

JUDGES	EMPLOYEES	FACILITIES
65 Judges (4 vacancies)	FTE Count	6 Courthouses
4 Minorities	729.3 authorized	(2 administrative buildings)
22 Female	677.7 filled	74 Courtrooms
21 Magistrates		(5 shelled courtrooms,
7 Female		4 Grand Jury rooms)

JUDICIARY'S CASELOAD SUMMARY

COURT	CASE TYPE	FILING/ HEARINGS	DISPOSITIONS
Supreme Court	Appeals	366	302
	Appellate Mediation	89	37
Superior Court	Felony	5,156	5,370
	Misdemeanor	217	238
	Civil	10,778	7,285
Family Court	Juvenile	9,350	10,325
	Divorce	3,721	3,809
	Miscellaneous Petitions	749	
	Abuse	2,292	2,328
	Child Support	*6,284	
	Support Hearings	**22,926	
District Court	Misdemeanors	26,601	24,350
	Small Claims	19,218	20,975
	Civil	23,805	20,147
	Abuse	979	
	Mental Health/Other	729	
	Administrative Appeals	211	
Workers' Compensation Court		7,712	7,652
Traffic Tribunal		85,790	89,841
Total Filings and Dispositions		204,047	192,659
Including Support		226,973	

* Reciprocal filings stay open until age of majority of child unless otherwise ordered by court.

** Support hearings represent the number of hearings held. Therefore, the same case may be counted more than once.

SUPREME COURT APPELLATE CASELOAD

Criminal	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Docketed	69	64	74	54	63
Disposed	71	71	70	61	68
Pending	125	129	134	129	119
Civil	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Docketed	157	157	147	127	159
Disposed	159	155	153	128	147
Pending	222	237	223	221	215
Certiorari	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Docketed	80	83	100	76	67
Disposed	88	63	88	82	69
Pending	63	110	96	87	77
Miscellaneous	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Docketed	38	37	37	66	77
Disposed	40	31	42	48	55
Pending	32	51	39	58	69
All Cases	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Docketed	344	341	358	323	366
Disposed	358	320	353	319	339
Pending	442	527	492	495	480

SUPREME COURT MANNER OF DISPOSITION

Before Argument	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Withdrawn	60	57	76	62	71
Dismissed	27	20	37	20	26
Petition Granted	6	4	10	8	12
Petition Denied	73	53	67	69	39
Other	24	17	39	31	33
Total	190	151	229	190	181
After Argument/ Motion Calendar	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Withdrawn	0	2	1	1	3
Affirmed	65	78	53	49	69
Modified	4	4	3	2	1
Reversed	16	8	12	8	13
Other	6	2	2	4	5
Orders	20	38	27	13	21
Opinions	71	56	44	51	70
Total	91	94	71	64	91
After Argument/Merits	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Withdrawn	1	6	1	3	0
Affirmed	41	48	31	42	39
Modified	12	1	7	2	6
Reversed	22	20	13	16	21
Other	1	0	1	2	1
Orders	5	7	2	7	7
Opinions	72	68	51	58	60
Total	77	75	53	65	67
Total Dispositions	358	320	353	319	339
% Disposed of Within 300 Days of Docketing	48%	38%	48%	52%	44%

SUPERIOR COURT CIVIL CASELOAD

CIVIL ACTIONS					
Providence/ Bristol County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	6,689	6,696	6,913	8,433	7,458
Cases Disposed	4,120	4,360	4,335	4,750	4,774
<i>Trial Calendar Summary</i>					
Cases Added	1,460	1,409	1,189	1,336	1,216
Cases Disposed	1,443	1,408	1,291	1,321	1,152
Pending at Year-End	1,428	1,573	1,559	1,556	1,585
Kent County					
Cases Filed	1,168	1,208	1,355	1,761	1,729
Cases Disposed	920	911	953	1,164	1,158
<i>Trial Calendar Summary</i>					
Cases Added	312	309	272	321	289
Cases Disposed	426	433	367	323	324
Pending at Year-End	150	132	152	173	182
Washington County					
Cases Filed	772	765	866	939	892
Cases Disposed	604	614	656	693	697
<i>Trial Calendar Summary</i>					
Cases Added	214	181	188	179	169
Cases Disposed	265	257	230	202	163
Pending at Year-End	177	147	132	142	159
Newport County					
Cases Filed	586	630	677	722	699
Cases Disposed	581	483	420	542	656
<i>Trial Calendar Summary</i>					
Cases Added	158	152	142	148	107
Cases Disposed	252	160	154	159	175
Pending at Year-End	107	123	124	146	96
Statewide					
Cases Filed	9,215	9,299	9,811	11,855	10,778
Cases Disposed	6,225	6,368	6,364	7,149	7,285
<i>Trial Calendar Summary</i>					
Cases Added	2,144	2,051	1,791	1,984	1,781
Cases Disposed	2,386	2,258	2,042	2,005	1,814
Pending at Year-End	1,862	1,975	1,967	2,017	2,022

SUPERIOR COURT MANNER OF DISPOSITION CIVIL TRIAL CALENDAR

CIVIL ACTIONS					
Providence/ Bristol County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Verdicts	25	23	21	10	5
Judicial Decisions	17	7	7	6	5
Total Trials	42	30	28	16	10
Dismissed/Settled/Other Arbitration/Other Exceptions	1,240	944	902	857	755
Total Disposed	1,443	1,408	1,291	1,321	1,152
Kent County					
Verdicts	14	4	4	0	0
Judicial Decisions	15	5	2	1	9
Total Trials	29	9	6	1	9
Dismissed/Settled/Other Arbitration/Other Exceptions	359	332	255	231	235
Total Disposed	426	433	367	323	324
Washington County					
Verdicts	17	8	9	5	2
Judicial Decisions	6	4	6	5	2
Total Trials	23	12	15	10	4
Dismissed/Settled/Other Arbitration/Other Exceptions	225	186	155	125	119
Total Disposed	265	257	230	202	163
Newport County					
Verdicts	6	11	2	1	4
Judicial Decisions	10	7	10	8	8
Total Trials	16	18	12	9	12
Dismissed/Settled/Other Arbitration/Other Exceptions	227	116	121	123	134
Total Disposed	252	160	154	159	175
Statewide					
Verdicts	62	46	36	16	11
Judicial Decisions	48	23	25	20	24
Total Trials	110	69	61	36	35
Dismissed/Settled/Other Arbitration/Other Exceptions	2,051	1,578	1,433	1,336	1,243
Total Disposed	2,386	2,258	2,042	2,005	1,814

SUPERIOR COURT FELONY CASELOAD

FELONIES					
Providence/ Bristol County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	3,909	4,293	4,521	4,060	3,716
Cases Disposed	4,010	4,267	4,429	4,171	3,964
Total Pending Cases	1,791	1,843	1,708	2,075	2,232
% Over 180 Days Old	50%	43%	44%	47%	52%
Kent County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	745	765	676	676	776
Cases Disposed	939	707	760	712	712
Total Pending Cases	199	254	154	123	191
% Over 180 Days Old	22%	34%	31%	20%	23%
Washington County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	434	571	453	438	389
Cases Disposed	413	557	490	446	403
Total Pending Cases	127	126	104	118	129
% Over 180 Days Old	17%	27%	19%	26%	16%
Newport County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	421	332	296	325	275
Cases Disposed	347	351	275	292	291
Total Pending Cases	99	89	109	115	108
% Over 180 Days Old	9%	22%	18%	30%	41%
Statewide	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	5,509	5,961	5,946	5,499	5,156
Cases Disposed	5,709	5,882	5,954	5,621	5,370
Total Pending Cases	2,216	2,312	2,075	2,431	2,660
% Over 180 Days Old	44%	40%	40%	44%	47%

SUPERIOR COURT MANNER OF DISPOSITION FELONIES

FELONIES					
Providence/ Bristol County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pled	3,624	3,936	4,078	3,843	3,532
Filed	8	1	1	2	15
Dismissed	338	264	300	281	369
Trial	40	66	49	45	42
Other	0	0	1	0	6
Total	4,010	4,267	4,429	4,171	3,964
% Disposed of Within 180 Days of Filing	68%	70%	72%	62%	64%
Kent County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pled	679	650	713	642	666
Filed	18	17	0	1	3
Dismissed	237	33	35	56	34
Trial	5	7	11	13	9
Other	0	0	1	0	0
Total	939	707	760	712	712
% Disposed of Within 180 Days of Filing	66%	83%	80%	80%	86%
Washington County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pled	354	490	438	393	362
Filed	11	7	1	0	1
Dismissed	36	42	47	50	34
Trial	10	14	4	3	6
Other	2	4	0	0	0
Total	413	557	490	446	403
% Disposed of Within 180 Days of Filing	86%	82%	81%	79%	76%
Newport County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pled	289	298	249	254	228
Filed	10	10	6	3	6
Dismissed	42	35	18	29	52
Trial	6	7	2	6	5
Other	0	1	0	0	0
Total	347	351	275	292	291
% Disposed of Within 180 Days of Filing	80%	86%	77%	76%	70%
Statewide	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pled	4,946	5,374	5,478	5,132	4,788
Filed	47	35	8	6	25
Dismissed	653	374	400	416	489
Trial	61	94	66	67	62
Other	2	5	2	0	6
Total	5,709	5,882	5,954	5,621	5,370
% Disposed of Within 180 Days of Filing	70%	74%	74%	67%	69%

SUPERIOR COURT MISDEMEANOR CASELOAD

MISDEMEANORS					
Providence/ Bristol County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	173	155	149	132	87
Cases Disposed	117	101	93	211	127
Total Pending Cases	59	91	111	142	118
% Over 90 Days Old	83%	66%	74%	80%	86%
Kent County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	47	38	56	42	25
Cases Disposed	45	52	50	53	25
Total Pending Cases	23	9	15	10	8
% Over 90 Days Old	52%	89%	53%	50%	38%
Washington County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	41	47	36	23	30
Cases Disposed	53	60	30	26	24
Total Pending Cases	12	4	8	5	11
% Over 90 Days Old	33%	0%	13%	60%	55%
Newport County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	13	32	46	43	75
Cases Disposed	30	25	29	52	62
Total Pending Cases	2	10	17	15	16
% Over 90 Days Old	0%	0%	53%	73%	56%
Statewide	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	274	272	287	240	217
Cases Disposed	245	238	202	342	238
Total Pending Cases	96	114	151	172	153
% Over 90 Days Old	68%	60%	66%	77%	78%

SUPERIOR COURT MANNER OF DISPOSITION MISDEMEANORS

MISDEMEANORS					
Providence/ Bristol County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pled	74	65	58	167	88
Filed	8	6	10	3	11
Dismissed	30	27	19	21	26
Trial	5	3	6	20	2
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total	117	101	93	211	127
% Disposed of Within 90 Days of Filing	28%	24%	19%	22%	18%
Kent County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pled	21	32	34	42	15
Filed	7	11	1	1	2
Dismissed	17	7	12	8	6
Trial	0	1	2	2	1
Other	0	1	1	0	1
Total	45	52	50	53	25
% Disposed of Within 90 Days of Filing	47%	67%	73%	51%	83%
Washington County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pled	37	33	23	19	15
Filed	3	9	0	1	3
Dismissed	10	16	6	4	5
Trial	2	0	0	0	1
Other	1	2	1	2	0
Total	53	60	30	26	24
% Disposed of Within 90 Days of Filing	81%	81%	90%	89%	83%
Newport County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pled	11	7	12	35	31
Filed	4	2	2	2	8
Dismissed	14	13	9	9	18
Trial	1	0	2	3	5
Other	0	3	4	3	0
Total	30	25	29	52	62
% Disposed of Within 90 Days of Filing	33%	85%	89%	47%	67%
Statewide	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pled	143	137	127	263	149
Filed	22	28	13	7	24
Dismissed	71	63	46	42	55
Trial	8	4	10	25	9
Other	1	6	6	5	1
Total	245	238	202	342	238
% Disposed of Within 90 Days of Filing	41%	50%	47%	41%	46%

FAMILY COURT DOMESTIC RELATIONS

DOMESTIC					
Providence/ Bristol County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	3,096	3,062	2,935	2,995	2,875
Filed - Divorce Only	2,630	2,558	2,479	2,472	2,382
Disposed	2,761	2,457	2,542	2,433	2,454
Cases Greater than 360 Days Old	3	19	15	37	28
Kent County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	805	763	761	764	758
Filed - Divorce Only	714	678	666	671	648
Disposed	729	735	710	672	647
Cases Greater than 360 Days Old	7	10	0	3	3
Washington County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	561	577	505	503	520
Filed - Divorce Only	483	509	444	421	423
Disposed	549	460	480	456	429
Cases Greater than 360 Days Old	0	0	0	2	2
Newport County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	329	377	348	334	317
Filed - Divorce Only	263	316	289	276	268
Disposed	292	315	271	285	279
Cases Greater than 360 Days Old	10	8	9	4	0
Statewide	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	4,791	4,779	4,549	4,596	4,470
Filed - Divorce Only	4,090	4,061	3,878	3,840	3,721
Disposed	4,331	3,967	4,003	3,846	3,809
Cases Greater than 360 Days Old	20	37	24	46	33
Abuse Complaint Filed	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Providence/Bristol County	1,736	1,806	1,669	1,705	1,724
Kent County	316	328	373	328	364
Washington County	112	88	94	87	101
Newport County	77	86	97	105	103
Statewide Total	2,241	2,308	2,233	2,225	2,292
Support Petitions Filed	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Support Petitions Filed	4,551	5,307	5,442	4,697	6,284

FAMILY COURT JUVENILE CASELOAD

JUVENILE FILINGS BY CATEGORY					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Wayward/Delinquent	7,018	7,125	6,527	6,713	6,065
Dependency/Neglect/ Abuse	2,162	2,590	1,692	1,705	1,591
Termination of Parental Rights	424	348	371	369	301
Adoption/Guardianship Violations	599	541	484	492	467
Other	938	1,045	1,130	1,029	874
Total Filings	68	74	60	62	52
	11,209	11,723	10,264	10,370	9,350
JUVENILE CALENDAR RESULTS FOR WAYWARD/DELINQUENT CASES					
Providence/ Bristol County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	5,537	5,706	5,517	5,370	4,792
Disposed	5,141	5,378	5,585	5,469	5,256
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	75%	75%	74%	73%	68%
Kent County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	1,289	1,241	1,149	1,215	1,017
Disposed	1,175	1,303	1,247	1,226	1,167
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	57%	57%	65%	65%	66%
Washington County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	728	708	561	674	667
Disposed	588	689	623	607	685
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	76%	76%	66%	78%	73%
Newport County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	402	515	430	483	463
Disposed	407	443	480	507	432
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	61%	69%	63%	72%	69%
Statewide	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	7,956	8,170	7,657	7,742	6,939
Disposed	7,311	7,813	7,935	7,809	7,540
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	72%	72%	71%	72%	68%

FAMILY COURT CHILD PROTECTION

JUVENILE CALENDAR RESULTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION CASES

Providence/ Bristol County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS					
Filed	338	273	290	299	259
Disposed	269	296	341	324	309
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	68%	67%	53%	74%	69%
DEPENDENCY/NEGLECT/ ABUSE					
Filed	1,626	1,915	1,250	1,266	1,167
Disposed	1,311	1,704	1,712	1,634	1,425
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	59%	52%	39%	42%	46%
OTHER					
Filed	441	404	389	378	359
Disposed	373	431	373	385	386
Kent County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS					
Filed	48	39	50	43	22
Disposed	36	51	28	46	57
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	31%	24%	59%	76%	92%
DEPENDENCY/NEGLECT/ ABUSE					
Filed	284	352	243	192	222
Disposed	254	337	263	242	185
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	57%	51%	57%	73%	50%
OTHER					
Filed	108	105	81	110	92
Disposed	116	97	83	106	98
Washington County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS					
Filed	15	16	12	11	4
Disposed	25	14	10	11	13
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	33%	80%	33%	0%	0%
DEPENDENCY/NEGLECT/ ABUSE					
Filed	115	193	132	144	100
Disposed	112	164	161	139	111
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	49%	62%	39%	49%	48%
OTHER					
Filed	74	64	48	47	46
Disposed	67	68	38	59	46

Newport County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS					
Filed	23	20	19	16	16
Disposed	16	17	19	12	20
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	56%	57%	46%	36%	20%
DEPENDENCY/NEGLECT/ ABUSE					
Filed	137	130	67	103	102
Disposed	108	115	96	102	115
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	54%	40%	21%	29%	30%
OTHER					
Filed	44	42	26	19	22
Disposed	32	46	22	22	20
Statewide	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS					
Filed	424	348	371	369	301
Disposed	346	378	398	393	399
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	60%	58%	52%	71%	67%
DEPENDENCY/NEGLECT/ ABUSE					
Filed	2,162	2,590	1,692	1,705	1,591
Disposed	1,785	2,320	2,232	2,117	1,836
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	58%	52%	41%	45%	45%
OTHER					
Filed	667	615	544	554	519
Disposed	588	642	516	572	550

DISTRICT COURT SMALL CLAIMS

Second Division Newport County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	895	808	831	957	521
Cases Disposed	1,933	1,420	1,115	797	661
Third Division Kent County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	2,459	3,133	6,335	6,564	9,871
Cases Disposed	2,532	4,686	5,675	6,343	9,092
Fourth Division Washington County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	1,094	1,152	1,335	1,500	1,002
Cases Disposed	1,787	1,563	1,815	1,388	1,043
Sixth Division Providence/ Bristol County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	12,133	13,417	10,929	12,295	7,824
Cases Disposed	15,250	12,706	10,907	10,312	10,179
Statewide	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	16,581	18,510	19,430	21,316	19,218
Cases Disposed	21,502	20,375	19,512	18,840	20,975

DISTRICT COURT CIVIL CASELOAD

Second Division Newport County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	1,367	1,150	1,316	1,413	1,304
Cases Disposed	1,632	1,427	1,299	1,032	1,014
Third Division Kent County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	2,343	3,018	4,917	6,519	6,678
Cases Disposed	4,226	4,539	5,385	4,677	5,472
Fourth Division Washington County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	1,116	1,258	1,631	1,692	1,707
Cases Disposed	1,355	1,382	1,391	1,315	1,294
Sixth Division Providence/ Bristol County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	13,604	13,674	14,414	15,577	14,116
Cases Disposed	14,010	15,945	11,126	12,034	12,367
Statewide	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	18,430	19,100	22,278	25,201	23,805
Cases Disposed	21,223	23,293	19,201	19,058	20,147

MANNER OF DISPOSITION

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Defaults	11,008	10,275	10,802	13,678	13,818
Settlements	7,448	6,535	5,462	3,509	5,195
Judgments	3,046	3,565	3,248	1,653	1,962
Total	21,502	20,375	19,512	18,840	20,975

MANNER OF DISPOSITION

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Defaults	8,375	9,045	9,812	8,609	8,316
Settlements	7,076	8,454	3,226	3,929	5,219
Judgments	5,762	5,790	6,160	6,520	6,612
Other	10	4	3	0	0
Total	21,223	23,293	19,201	19,058	20,147

CASES FILED - OTHER CATEGORIES

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Domestic Abuse	734	741	746	952	979
Administrative Appeals	130	132	182	186	211
Mental Health Hearings	555	586	566	664	729

DISTRICT COURT CRIMINAL CASELOAD

MISDEMEANORS					
Second Division Newport County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	2,515	2,470	2,542	2,542	2,483
Cases Disposed	2,311	2,401	2,376	2,222	2,351
Total Pending	510	216	312	535	656
% Over 60 Days Old	69%	41%	54%	74%	70%
Third Division Kent County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	5,369	5,600	7,468	7,221	7,270
Cases Disposed	4,986	4,970	7,019	6,858	6,695
Total Pending	725	1,188	1,329	1,473	1,791
% Over 60 Days Old	53%	56%	59%	69%	69%
Fourth Division Washington County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	4,327	4,131	3,923	3,921	3,379
Cases Disposed	4,150	3,971	3,790	3,779	3,212
Total Pending	339	310	397	334	384
% Over 60 Days Old	41%	21%	32%	37%	36%
Sixth Division Providence/ Bristol County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	18,357	17,747	15,674	14,474	13,469
Cases Disposed	17,029	16,332	14,968	13,650	12,092
Total Pending	1,462	1,641	1,498	1,428	2,121
% Over 60 Days Old	39%	54%	48%	53%	64%
Statewide	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cases Filed	30,568	29,948	29,607	28,158	26,601
Cases Disposed	28,476	27,674	28,153	26,509	24,350
Total Pending	3,036	3,355	3,536	3,770	4,952
% Over 60 Days Old	48%	51%	51%	61%	64%

MANNER OF DISPOSITION

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pled	21,040	20,492	19,704	18,102	16,537
Filed	59	57	56	80	93
Dismissed	6,624	6,675	6,400	5,541	5,586
Trials	557	243	206	273	134
Other	196	207	1,787	2,513	2,000
Total	28,476	27,674	28,153	26,509	24,350
% Disposed within 60 Days	88%	86%	82%	82%	81%

STATEWIDE FELONIES

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	7,413	8,037	7,616	7,434	7,186

WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT MANNER/STAGE OF DISPOSITION

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
PRETRIAL					
Pretrial Order	3,147	3,264	3,016	2,892	2,815
Order	6	7	9	10	4
Decree	103	95	120	99	110
Consent Decree	69	132	227	149	154
Major Surgery	0	0	0	0	0
Withdrawn	2,644	2,555	2,646	2,898	2,608
Discontinued	18	3	8	21	11
Dismissed	74	68	67	67	61
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6,061	6,124	6,093	6,136	5,763
TRIAL					
Decision	1302	1259	1220	1267	1047
Consent Decree	173	199	141	145	138
Trial Claim Withdrawn	694	688	615	621	547
Petition Withdrawn	128	104	119	100	62
Order	30	13	15	18	23
Dismissed	25	17	12	14	4
Discontinued	2	2	0	0	4
Other	21	22	30	35	31
Total	2,375	2,304	2,152	2,200	1,852
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Appeals	56	51	31	53	37
Total Dispositions	8,492	8,479	8,276	8,389	7,652

WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT CASELOAD SUMMARY

EMPLOYEE PETITIONS	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Original	2,783	2,654	2,586	2,589	2,413
To Review	1,951	1,857	1,763	2,071	2,065
Second Injury	1	1	0	0	0
To Enforce	799	976	838	949	858
Total	5,534	5,488	5,187	5,609	5,336
EMPLOYER PETITIONS	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
To Review	1,629	1,608	1,543	1,373	1,276
OTHER	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Lump Sum Settlement	763	827	842	864	724
Hospital/Physician Fees	131	164	172	175	162
Miscellaneous	177	287	306	275	214
Total	1,071	1,278	1,320	1,314	1,100
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total Petitions	8,234	8,374	8,050	8,296	7,712
Total Dispositions	8,492	8,479	8,276	8,389	7,652
Total Pending Caseload	2,141	2,027	1,797	1,700	1,757
Total Cases Pending Trial	1030	926	785	687	737
% Pending Trial More Than 270 Days	37%	36%	34%	29%	34%

RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL (RITT) CASELOAD

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total Summonses Issued*	220,338	232,176	224,569	211,153	150,533
RITT Summonses Issued	117,046	115,848	104,288	98,407	85,790
Total Violations	142,365	140,107	126,828	118,387	104,395
RITT Summonses Disposed	118,876	117,319	108,216	101,044	89,841

BREAKDOWN OF DISPOSED SUMMONSES

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Court Hearings	72,111	72,019	68,092	63,406	59,491
Pay by Mail	46,765	45,300	40,124	37,638	30,350
Total	118,876	117,319	108,216	101,044	89,841
% Disposed of Within 60 Days	98%	97%	97%	97%	96%

BREATHALYZER REFUSALS

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	1,844	1,670	1,838	1,751	1,694
Disposed	1,847	1,737	1,848	1,884	1,814
% Disposed of Within 60 Days	89%	88%	84%	79%	80%

INSURANCE

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	11,026	9,871	8,462	8,408	8,300
Disposed	11,446	10,294	8,925	8,699	8,623
% Disposed of Within 60 Days	95%	94%	93%	94%	93%

APPEALS

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Filed	673	559	692	497	432
Disposed	458	385	330	245	395
Pending	50	54	162	18	59

* Includes summonses for both the RITT and municipal courts.



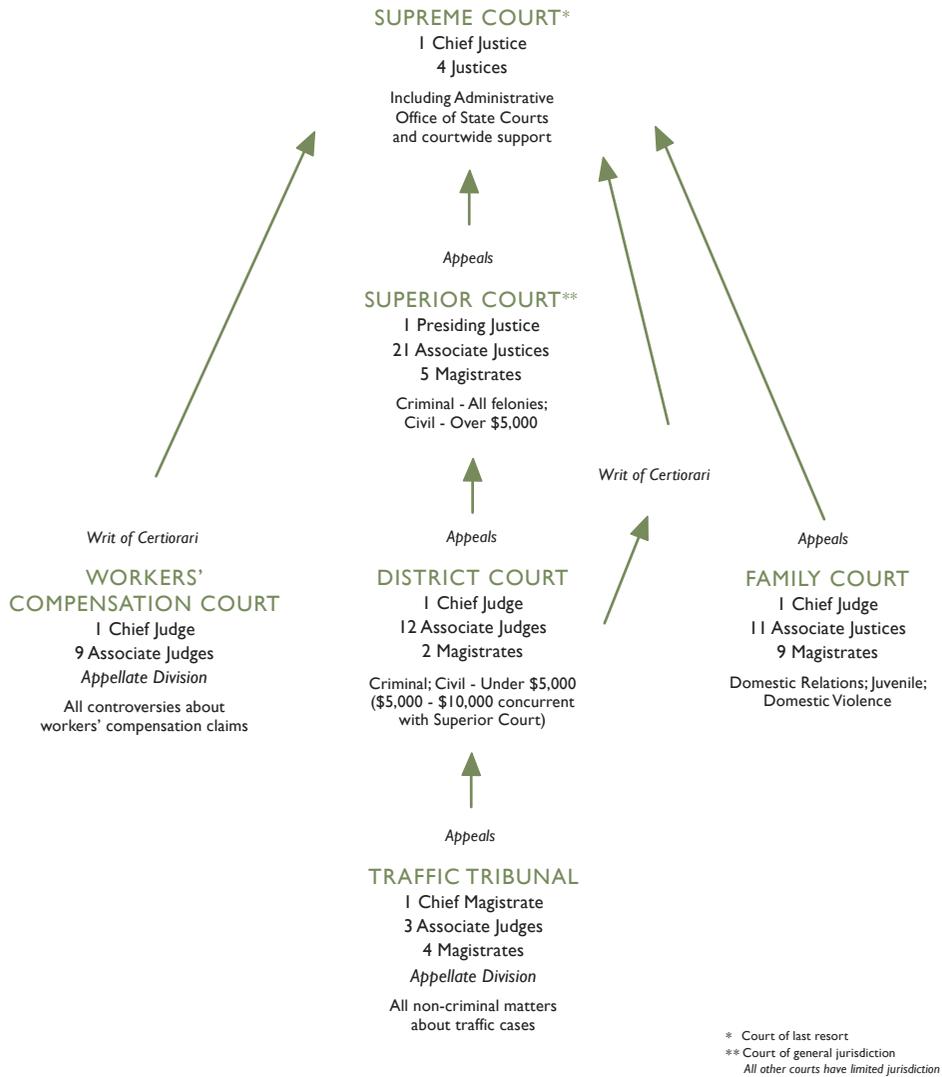
COURT STRUCTURE



Rhode Island Court Structure

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF STATE COURTS

State Court Administrator • Finance and Budget • Employee Relations
 State Law Library • Judicial Technology Center • Facilities and Operations/Security
 Judicial Records Center • Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit
 Mandatory Continuing Legal Education • Community Outreach and Public Relations
 Law Clerk Department • Judicial Planning • General Counsel and Alternative Dispute Resolution
 Disciplinary Counsel • Supreme Court Clerk's Office • Appellate Screening
 Administrative Assistant to Chief Justice • Interpreters' Office



* Court of last resort
 ** Court of general jurisdiction
 All other courts have limited jurisdiction