

Polk County, Iowa

Summary Report: Felony and Misdemeanor Cases District Court



Project Overview

The goal of the ECCM project is to discover, document, and disseminate effective criminal case management practices in state trial courts to help reduce delay and cost and improve the quality of justice. More than 90 courts are participating. Case-level information from the most recent 12-month period available was collected from each court for disposed felony and/or misdemeanor cases.

Case Types

Cases were classified into a set of case types determined by the most serious charge at filing. In order of severity, the case types are:

- Homicide (e.g., murder, manslaughter)
- Person offense (e.g., assault, robbery)
- Property offense (e.g., burglary, larceny)
- Drugs (e.g., manufacture, sale, use)
- Weapons (e.g., illegal possession)
- Driving While Intoxicated (e.g., DUI)
- Other motor vehicle (e.g., reckless driving)
- Legal process (e.g., bail, probation violation)
- Public order (e.g., disorderly conduct, vagrancy)
- Other felony/other misdemeanor

Case Counting Rules

A case is defined as a single defendant and all charges arising from a single incident. The data set includes a single record for each case. For cases involving multiple charges against a single defendant, the data was condensed to produce a single record based on the most serious charge at filing and disposition.

Active Time to Disposition

The recommended measure of case processing time excludes those time periods over the life of a case where the case is out of court control and no progress can be made (inactive time). For criminal cases this typically arises when a defendant fails to appear in court. When possible, we show active time to disposition, calculated by subtracting the inactive time from the total case processing time.

Polk Court Description

Population of County (2015): 467,711

Population Rank: 147th largest by population of the 3,142 U.S. counties

Type of Court & Data Available: Single-tier/felony and misdemeanor data

Judge Selection: Gubernatorial appointment - Retention election

Measuring Case Processing Time using the National Model Time Standards

Felonies

- 90% within 180 days
- 98% within 365 days

Misdemeanors

- 90% within 90 days
- 98% within 180 days

Time standards set expectations for timely case processing and provide a benchmark for assessing court performance. The **National Model Time Standards** (NCSC, 2011) for felony and misdemeanor cases are used here to provide time goals for resolving 90% and 98% of cases. In addition, the *mean* (average) and *median* (midpoint) days to disposition give insight into the more typical time taken to resolve cases. The *overall mean* for all ECCM sites is also included for comparison. When the % of cases within 90/180/365 days are the same, only one value is shown.

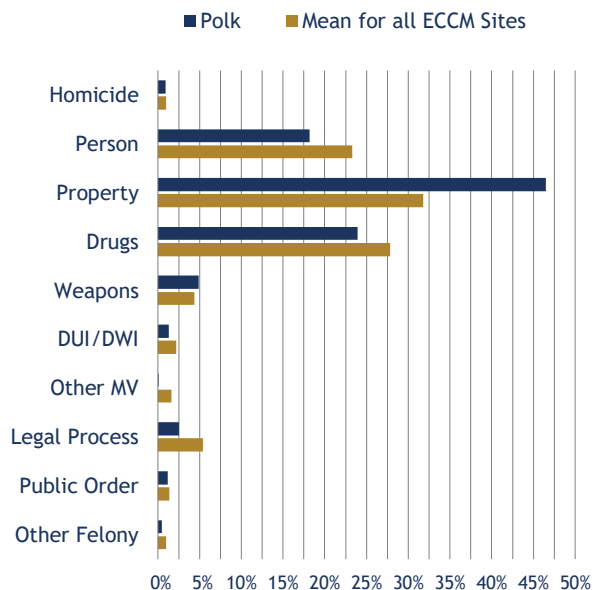
Polk County, Iowa

District Court - Felony Cases

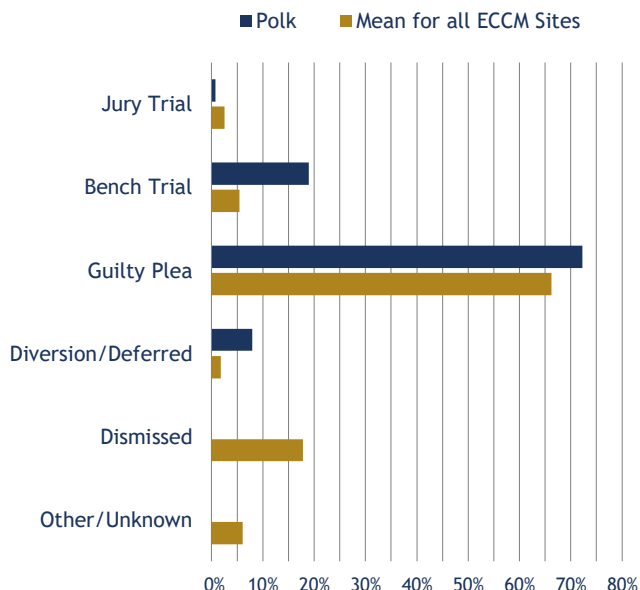
Total Felony Cases: 1,845



Caseload Composition



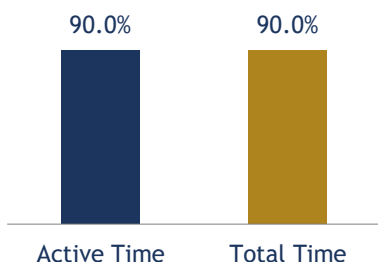
Manner of Disposition



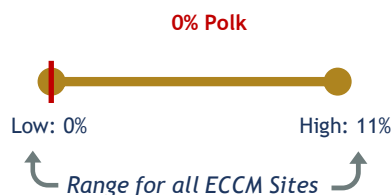
Active Time from Filing to Disposition All ECCM Sites in Iowa

County/Site	Total Cases	% within 180 days	% within 365 days	Mean # of days	Median # of days
Linn	671	59%	87%	233	161
Polk	1,845	63%	90%	253	149
Mean for all ECCM Sites	3,676	63%	86%	213	135

% Disposed within 365 Days Active Time vs. Total Time



% Difference between Active and Total Time



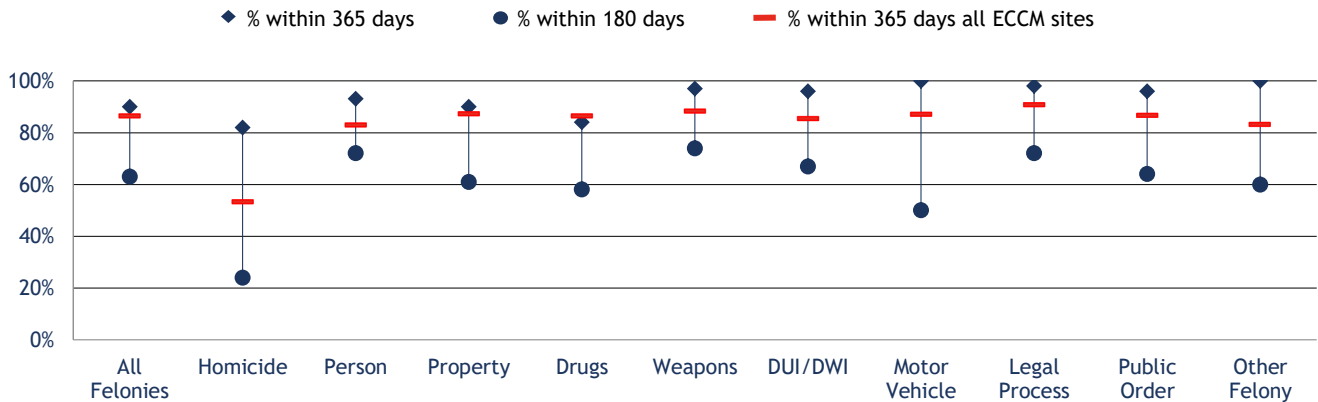
Polk County, Iowa

District Court - Felony Cases

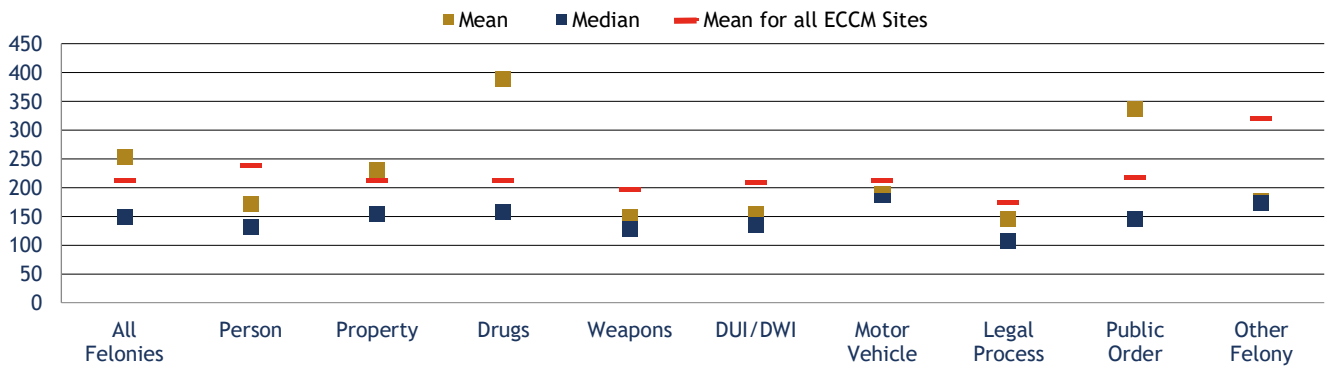
Total Felony Cases: 1,845



% Disposed Within 180 and 365 Days by Case Type (Active Time)

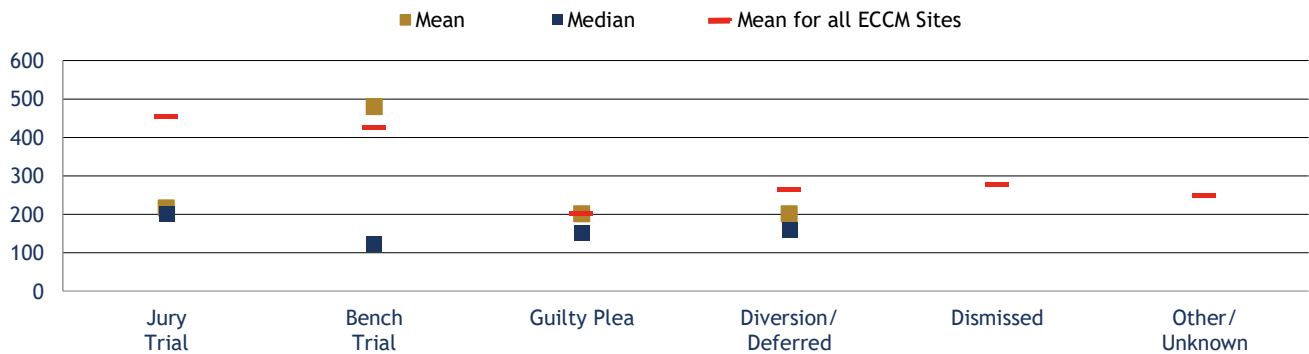


Disposed Cases: Mean and Median Days by Case Type (Active Time)



Note: Homicide mean = 334; median = 283. Mean for all ECCM sites = 468.

Mean and Median Days by Manner of Disposition (Active Time)



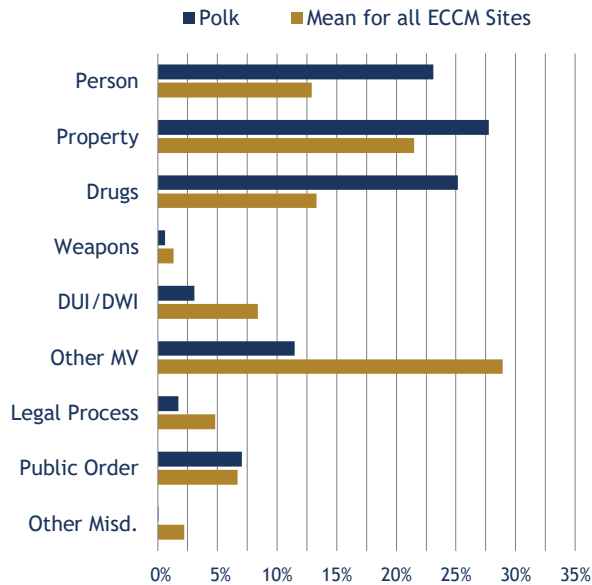
Polk County, Iowa

District Court - Misdemeanor Cases

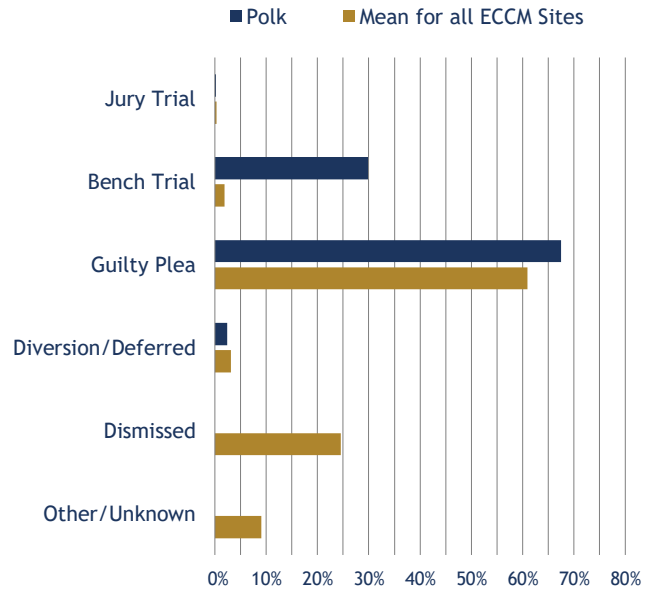


Total Misdemeanor Cases: 9,830

Caseload Composition



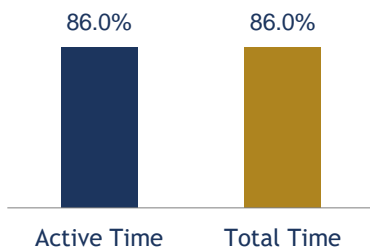
Manner of Disposition



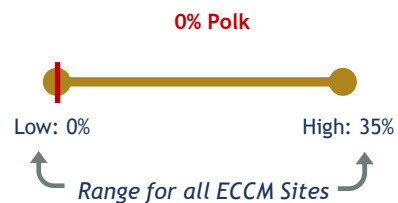
Active Time from Filing to Disposition All ECCM Sites in Iowa

County/Site	Total Cases	% within 180 days	% within 365 days	Mean # of days	Median # of days
Linn	3,872	59%	86%	137	80
Polk	9,830	60%	86%	187	74
Mean for all ECCM Sites	12,186	52%	75%	158	91

% Disposed within 180 Days Active Time vs. Total Time



% Difference between Active and Total Time



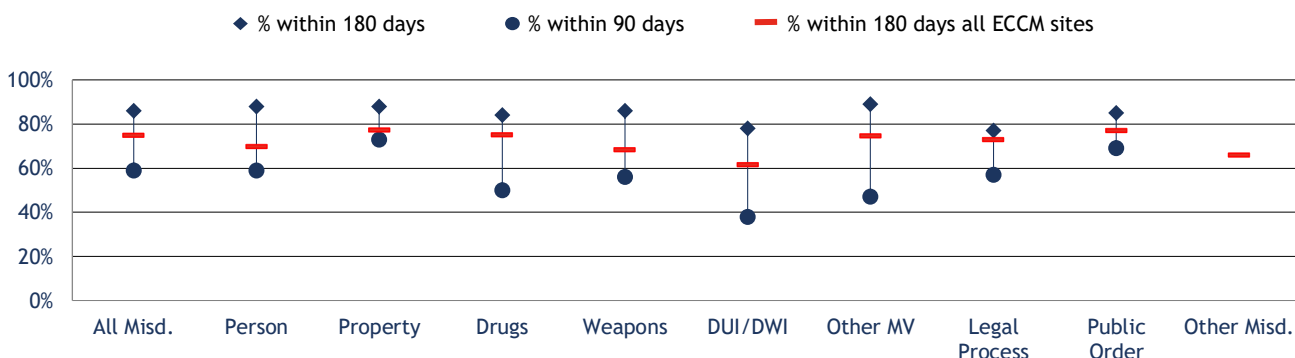
Polk County, Iowa

District Court - Misdemeanor Cases

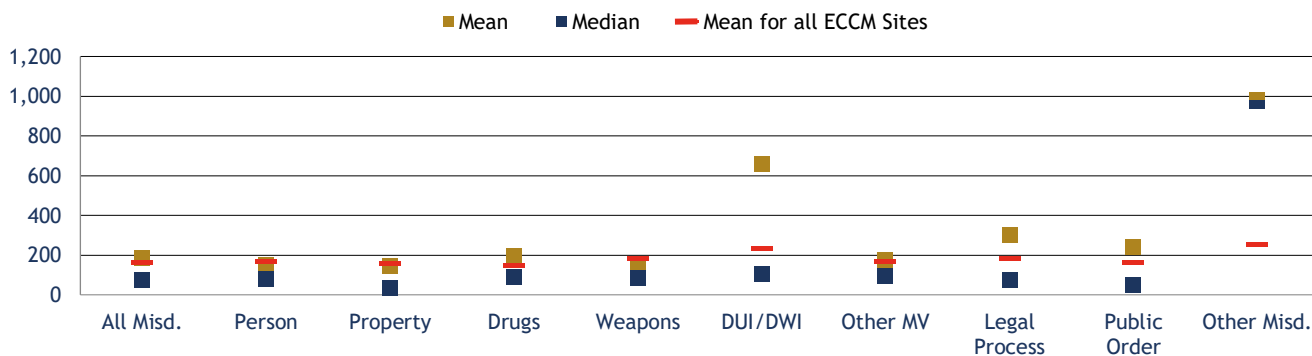


Total Misdemeanor Cases: 9,830

% Disposed Within 90 and 180 Days by Case Type (Active Time)



Disposed Cases: Mean and Median Days by Case Type (Active Time)



Mean and Median Days by Manner of Disposition (Active Time)

