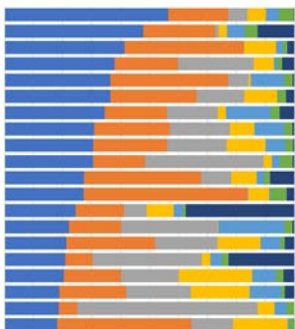
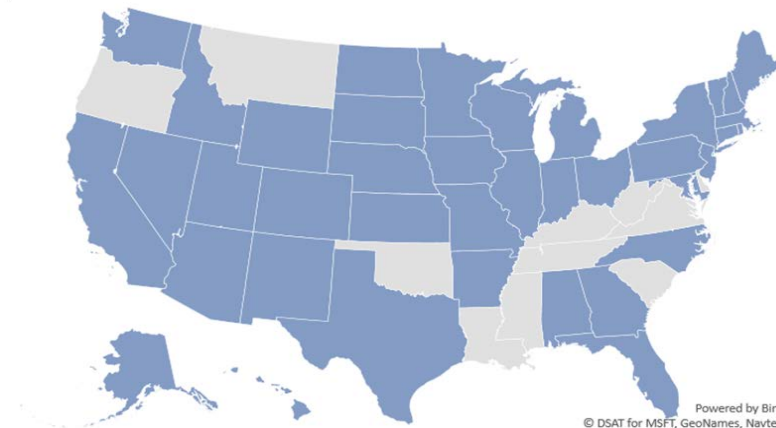
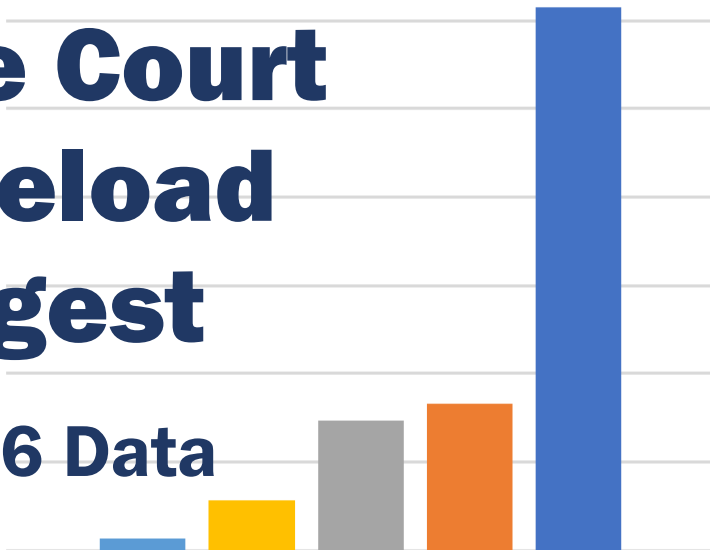


National Center for State Courts

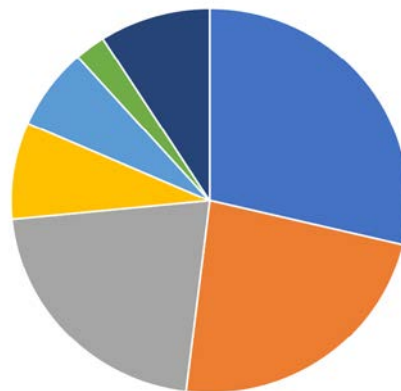
State Court Caseload Digest



2016 Data



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National Center for State Courts

State Court Caseload Digest

2016 Data



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*A joint project of
the Conference of State Court Administrators and
the National Center for State Courts.*

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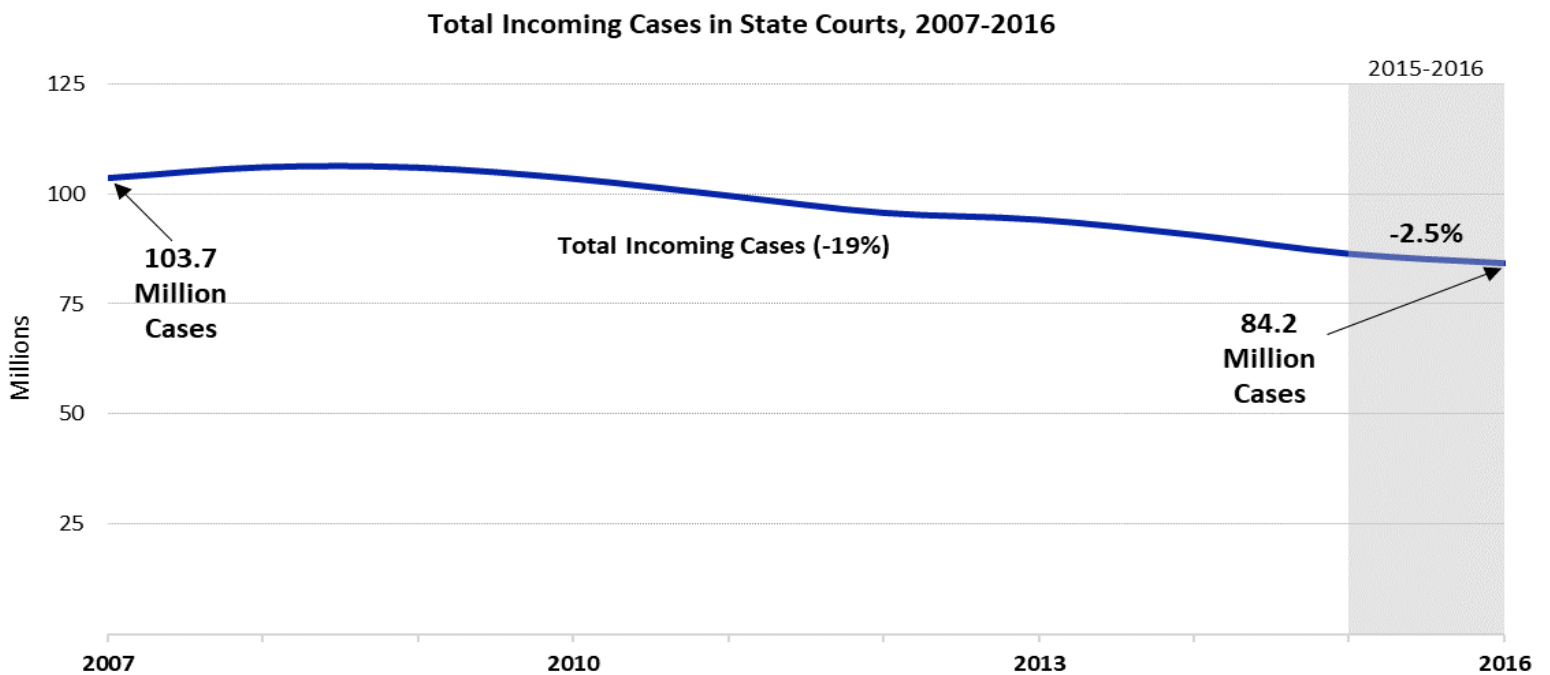
About the Data

The national totals reported here may include estimates for states that were unable to report caseload data in time for publication or whose data do not strictly conform to the reporting guidelines set forth in the *State Court Guide to Statistical Reporting*. States for whom estimates were used will not appear in any state-level tables in this document or any displays available on the CSP DataViewer. While the CSP statistical reports endeavor to provide the authoritative source for national caseload statistics, the official version of any state's data can only be provided by that state. The underlying data can be found on the CSP DataViewer at courtstatistics.org.

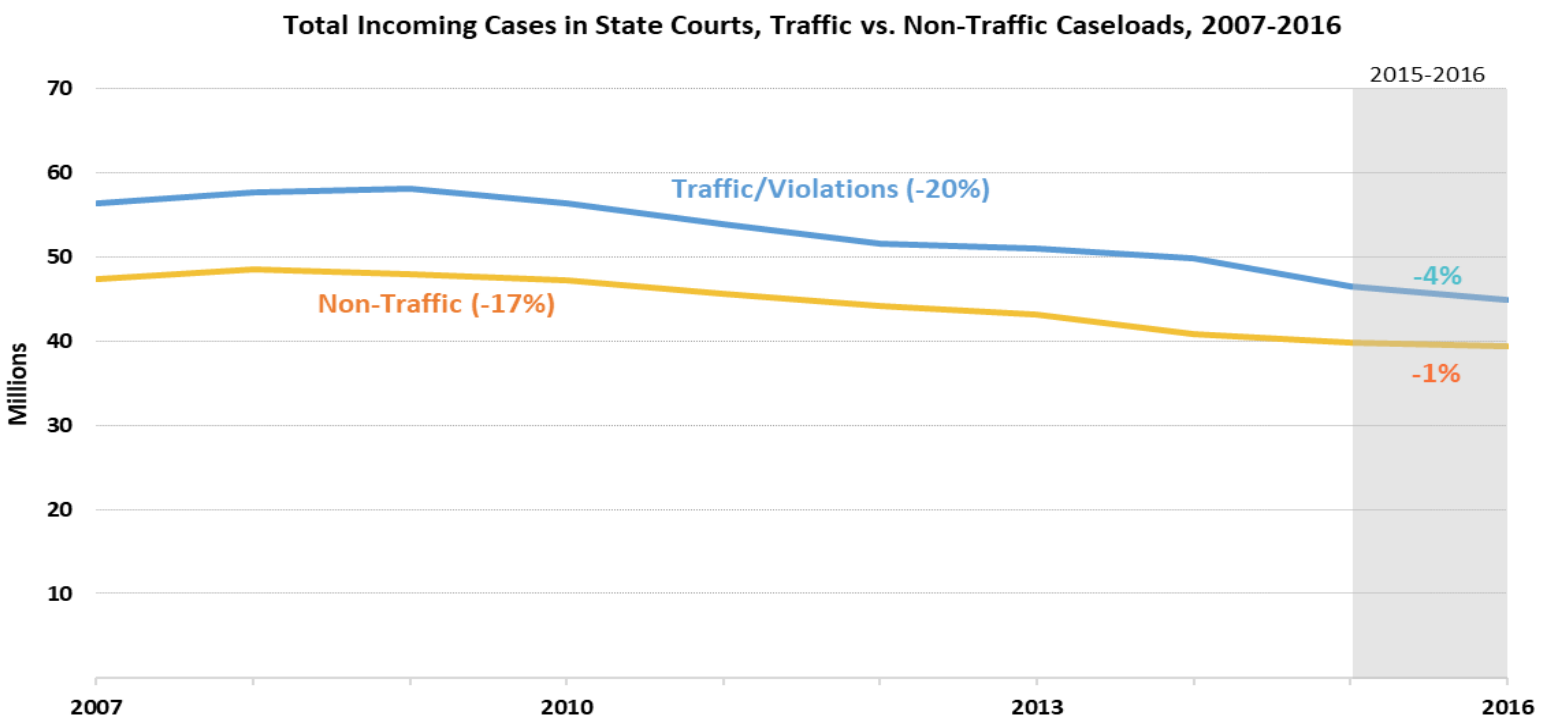
Suggested Citation

Court Statistics Project (2018). State Court Caseload Digest: 2016 Data. National Center for State Courts.

National Caseloads

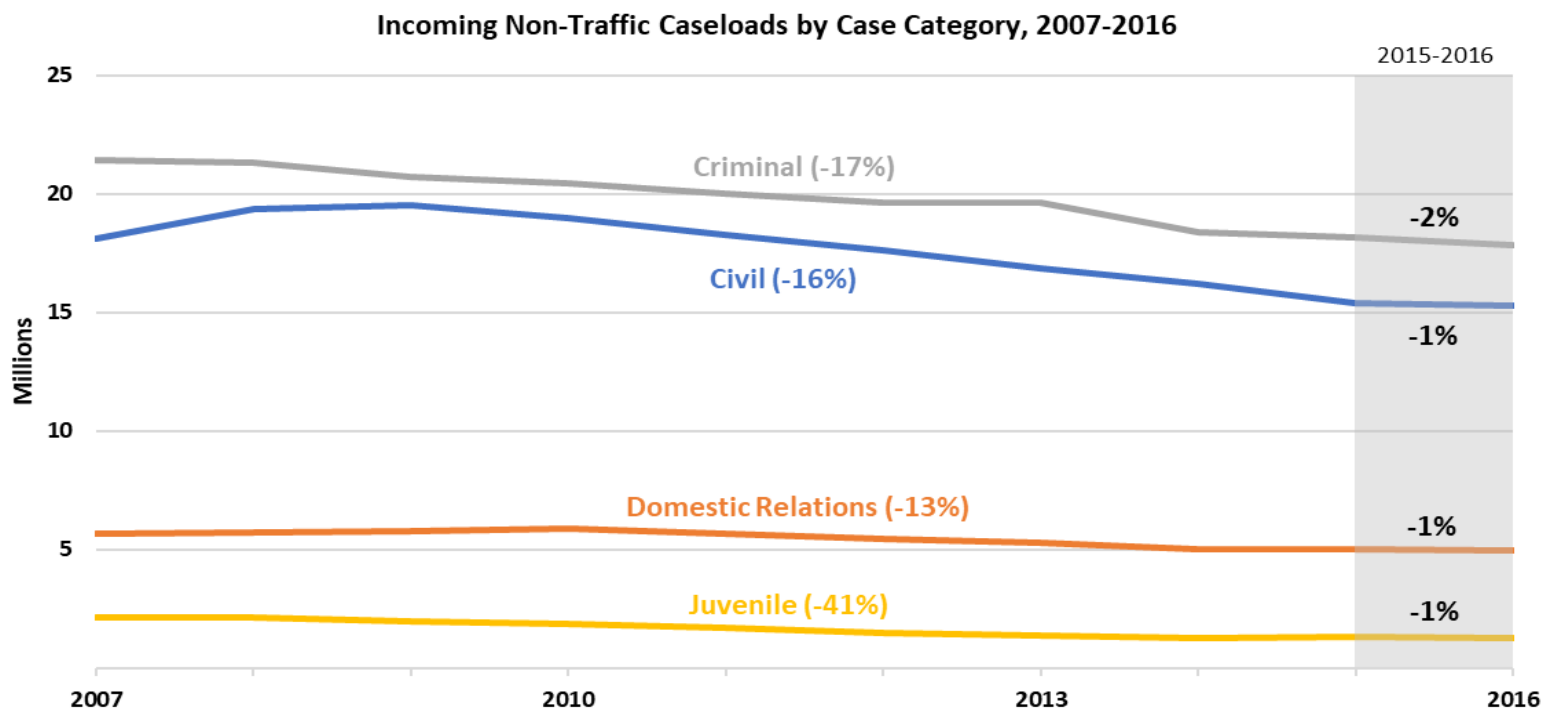


Total incoming caseloads in state courts reached an apex of just over 106.1 million cases at the onset of the Great Recession in 2008. Between 2009 and 2015, aggregate caseloads declined at an average annual rate of nearly 3.5 percent. However, in 2016, that rate fell to a 2.5 percent decrease overall.



When total caseloads are disaggregated, the influence of the largest one, Traffic/Violations cases, becomes clearly apparent. Here we see that Traffic/Violations cases, comprising over half of all incoming cases, dropped 4 percent between 2015 and 2016 versus the Non-Traffic caseloads (Civil, Domestic Relations, Criminal, and Juvenile), which fell a combined 1 percent.

National Caseloads - Cont'd



Further disaggregation of the four Non-Traffic caseloads show that each were essentially unchanged in 2016, with only Criminal cases declining at a rate of more than 1 percent. This suggests that the declines experienced in the state trial courts since 2009 may be leveling off after six consecutive years of decreases.

Number of Incoming Cases, by Case Category and Tier, 2016 (in Millions)

Case Category	Single	Two Tier		Total	Percent of Total
		General	Limited		
Traffic/Violations	8.9	2.5	33.5	44.9	53.3%
Criminal	2.4	3.2	12.2	17.8	21.2%
Civil	2.1	5.0	8.1	15.3	18.1%
Domestic Relations	0.8	3.4	0.7	5.0	5.9%
Juvenile	0.2	0.9	0.2	1.3	1.5%
Total	14.4	15.1	54.7	84.2	100.0%

Number of States*	11	42	53
Population (in Millions) ¹	74.7	252.0	326.7
Percent of Population	23%	77%	100%

*Includes District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico

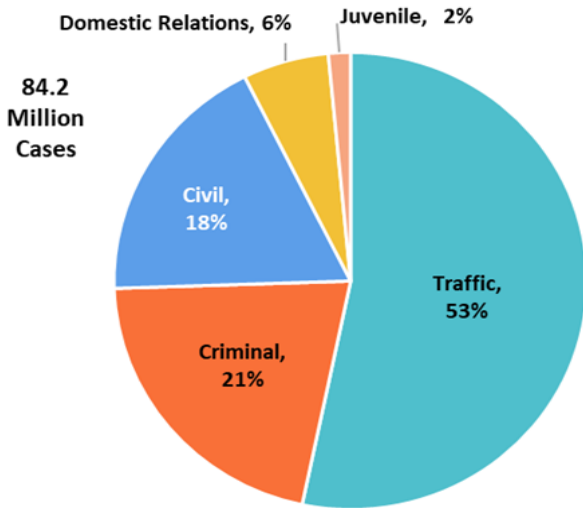
¹ Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Note: Single-tier states include: CA, DC, GU, ID, IL, IA, ME, MN, MO, PR, VT

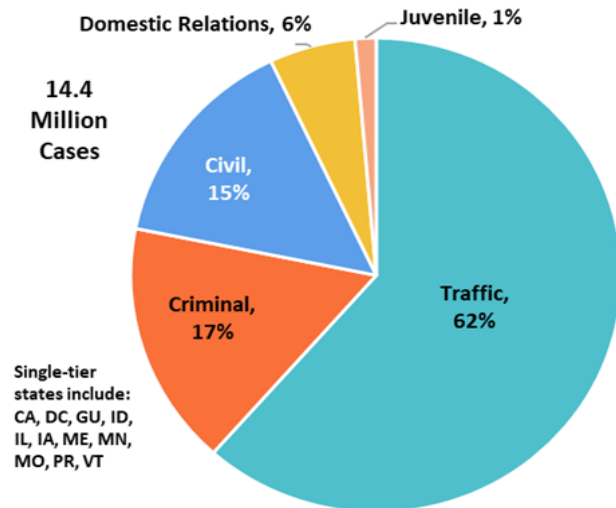
The 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam reported a total of 84.2 million incoming cases for 2016, or about 2.1 million fewer cases than were reported for 2015 (not shown). Just over half of all 2016 cases (53%) were reported in the Traffic/Violations category. These actions typically consume far fewer judicial and court resources than the remaining four categories of Criminal (21%), Civil (18%), Domestic Relations (6%), and Juvenile (<2%).

National Caseloads - Cont'd

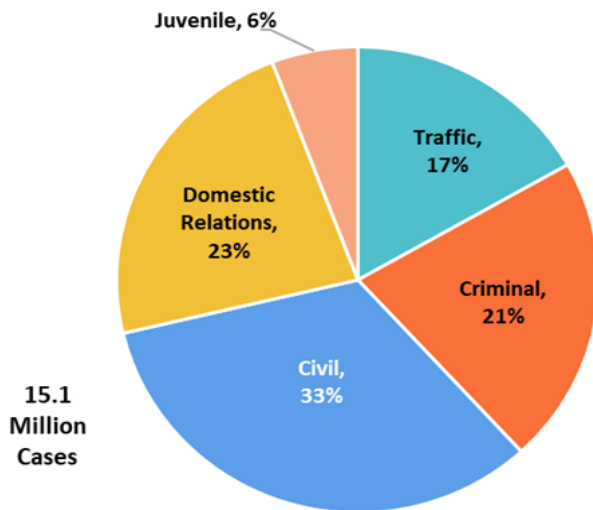
Composition of Incoming Cases, All Trial Courts, 2016



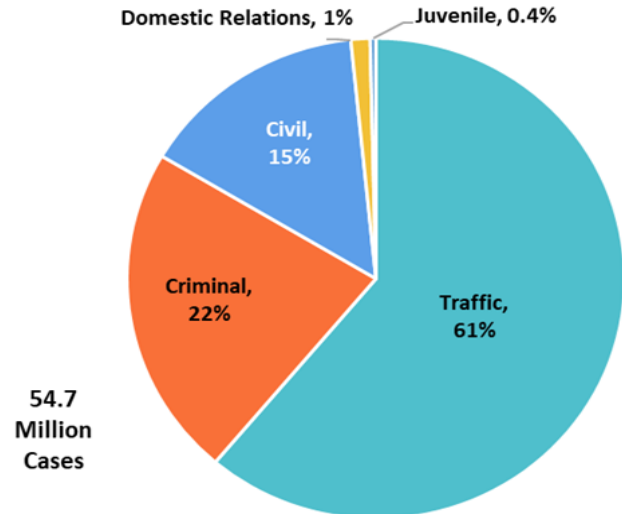
Single-Tier Courts, 2016



General Jurisdiction Courts, 2016



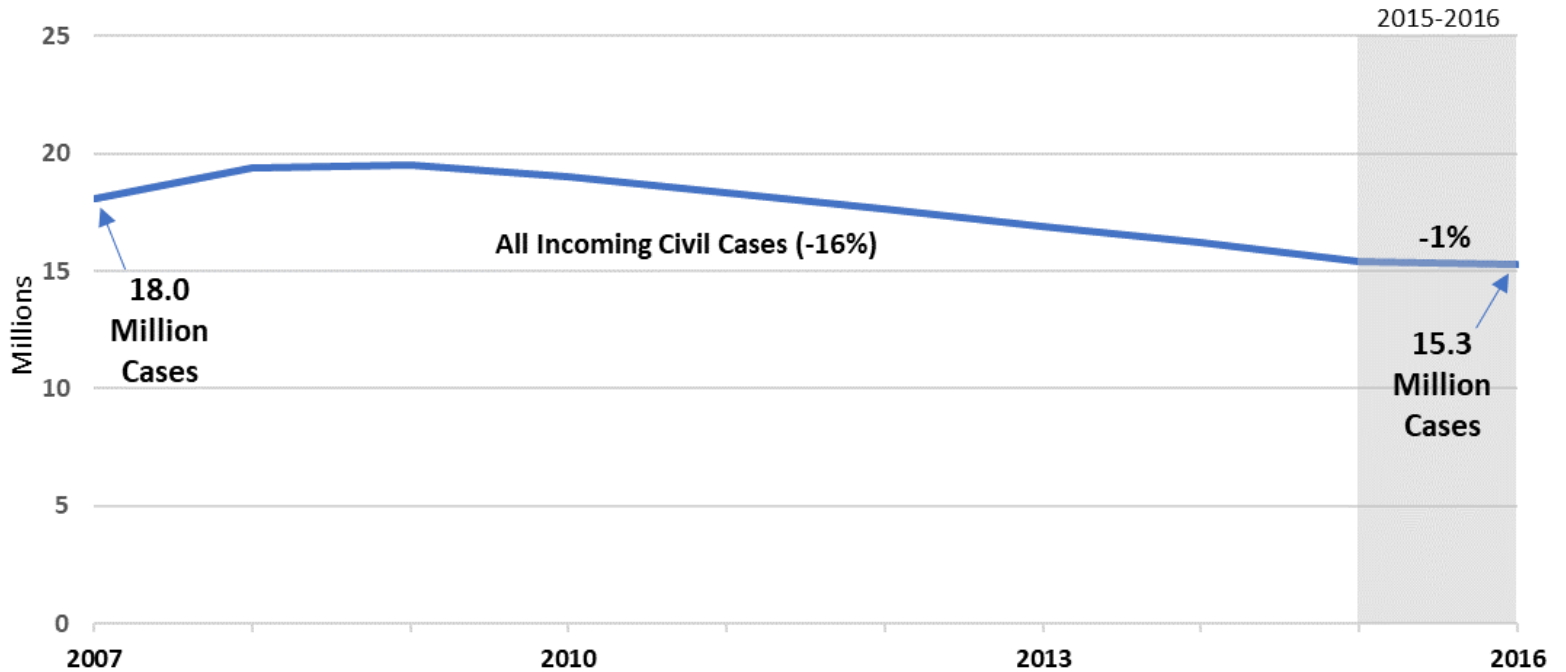
Limited Jurisdiction Courts, 2016



The structure of state trial courts fall into two basic categories: single-tiered systems and two-tiered systems. Eleven states and territories (CA, DC, GU, ID, IL, IA, ME, MN, MO, PR, and VT) employ one general jurisdiction court or "tier" that presides over all case types. The remaining 42 states divide their caseloads - often based on geography, case severity, or value - between some combination of general and limited jurisdiction courts. These charts show that the general and limited jurisdiction courts have distinctly different caseloads.

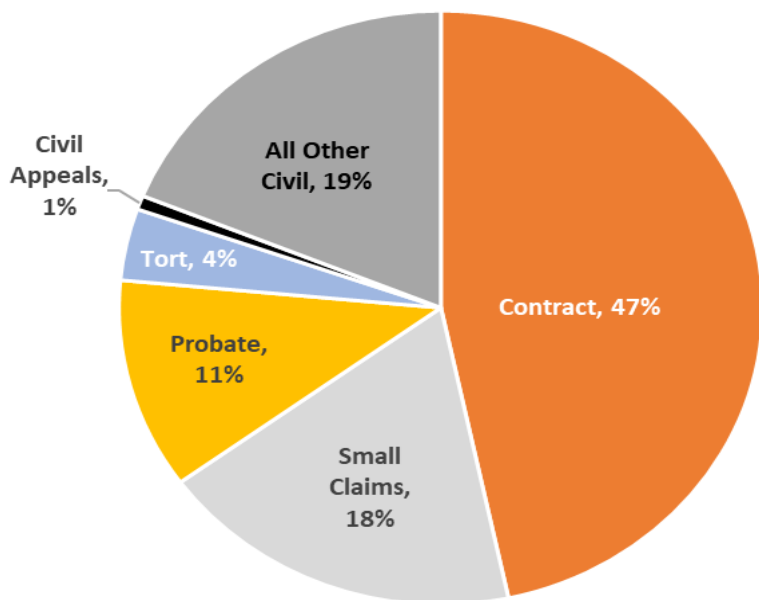
Civil Caseloads

Total Incoming Civil Cases in State Trial Courts, 2007-2016



Between 2009 and 2015, Civil caseloads fell by over 4 million cases, an annual rate of about -3.5 percent. However, reported caseloads for 2016 were only 1 percent below the previous year, suggesting that the end of the decline may be near.

Statewide Civil Caseload Composition in 26 States, 2016

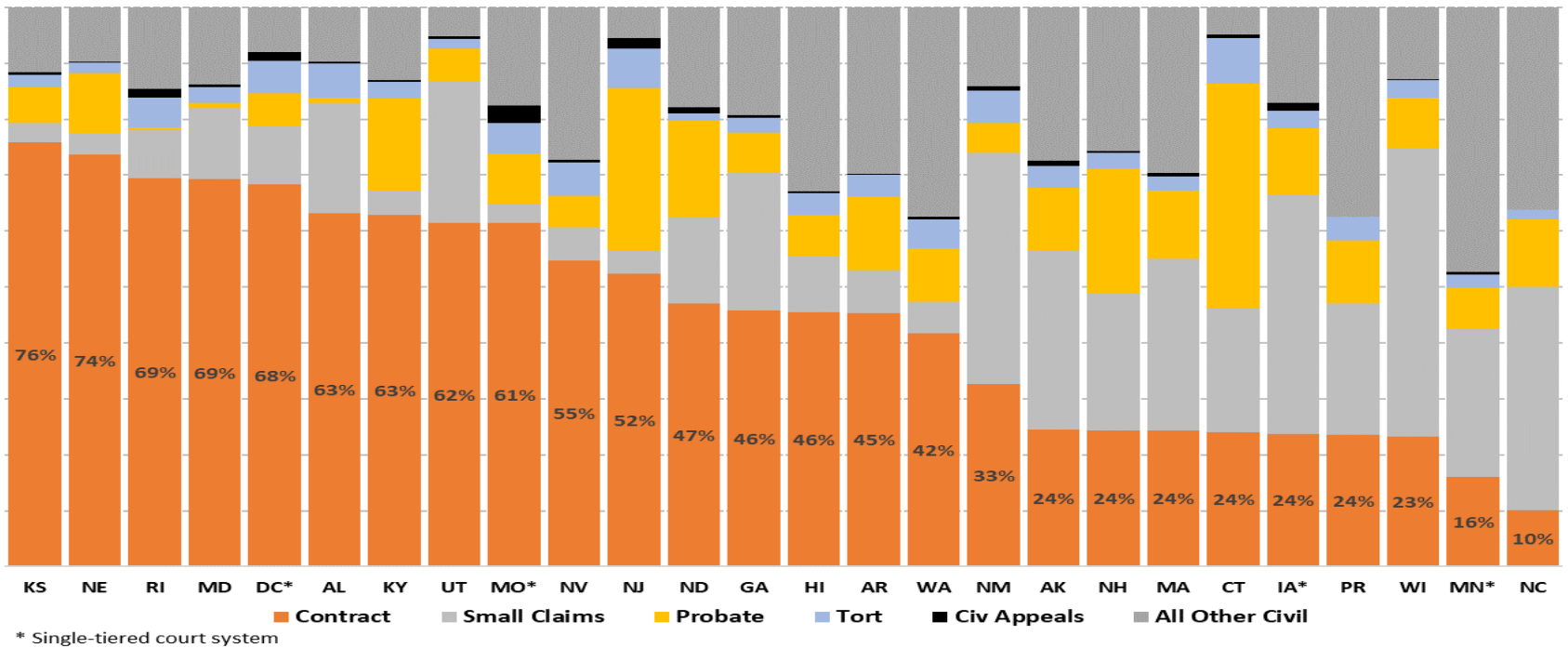


Civil caseloads comprise 35 different case types, including torts, contracts, real property, probate/estate, civil appeals, small claims, mental health, and more. This chart condenses those 35 to 5 more general categories as well as a residual "other." Contract cases dominate the civil landscapes in these 26 states, followed by small claims, which are often contractual in nature but of a lower monetary value.

States included in this graphic are: AK, AL, AR, CT, DC, GA, HI, IA, KS, KY, MA, MD, MN, MO, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NV, PR, RI, UT, WA, WI

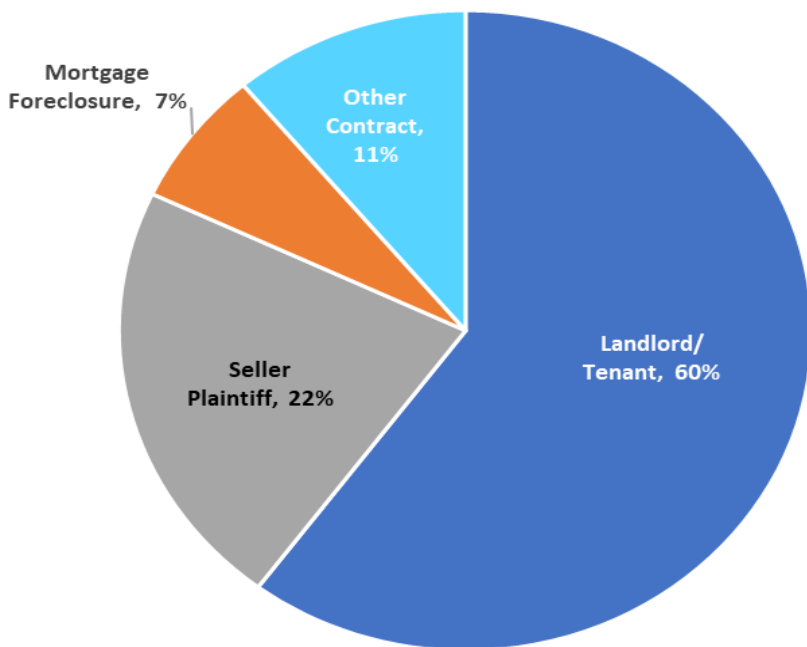
Civil Caseloads - Cont'd

Statewide Civil Caseload Composition in 26 States, 2016



The composition of Civil cases varies from state to state. Sorted by percent of contract cases, Kansas has the highest proportion of contract cases at 76 percent with just over 3 percent small claims. Conversely, North Carolina reports only 10 percent contract but 40 percent small claims. Kansas has a \$4,000 limit for small claims cases versus North Carolina's \$10,000 limit, which may help to explain some of this difference.

Composition of Contract Caseloads in 15 States, 2016

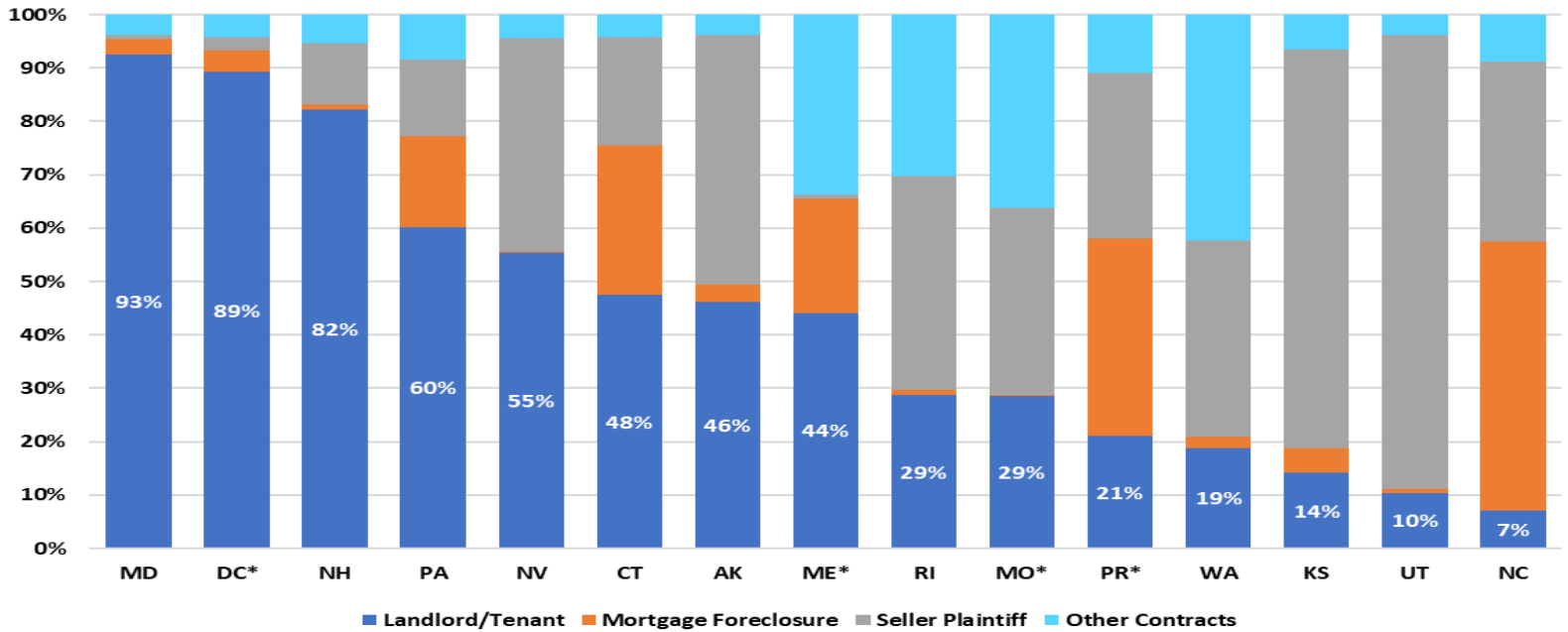


Fifteen states provided enough contract caseload detail to examine the composition of contract cases. In 2016, 6 of 10 contract cases were disputes between landlords and tenants while just over 2 of 10 cases were debt collection/seller plaintiff cases. Other contract cases in these states (11%) comprise buyer plaintiff, employment disputes, and contract fraud.

States included in this graphic are: AK, CT, DC, KS, MD, ME, MO, NC, NH, NV, PA, PR, RI, UT, WA

Civil Caseloads - Cont'd

Statewide Contract Caseload Composition in 15 States, 2016

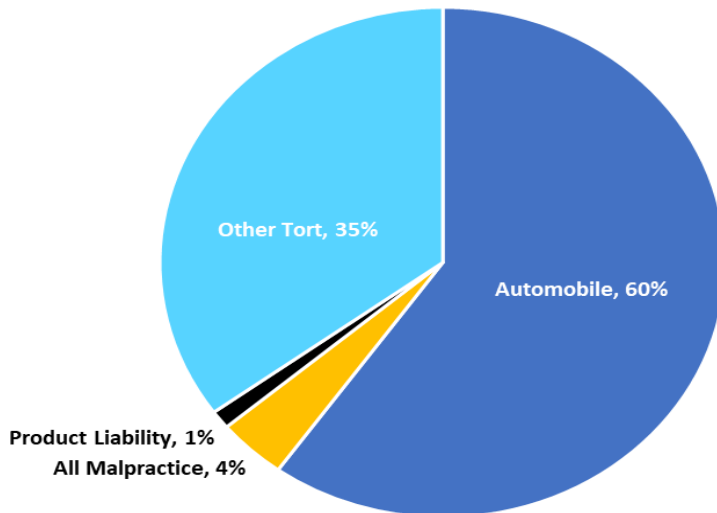


* Single-tiered court system

Other Contracts include buyer plaintiff, employment disputes, contract fraud, and other contracts.

The data from the 15 states shown here highlight some of the striking differences seen in contract caseload composition.

Composition of Tort Caseloads in 20 States, 2016

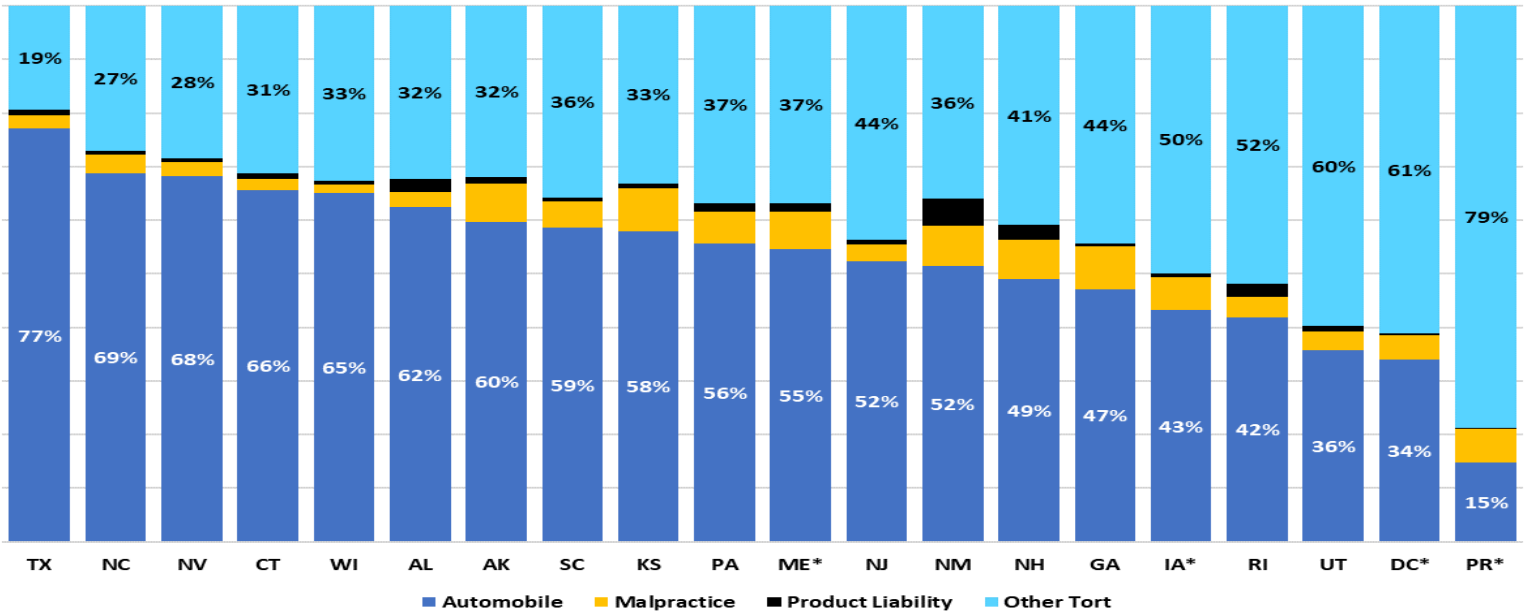


States included in this graphic include: AK, AL, CT, DC, GA, IA, KS, ME, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NV, PA, PR, RI, SC, TX, UT, WI

Tort cases allege some kind of injury - physical or emotional - caused by the defendant against the plaintiff. Torts include automobile, intentional, medical and other malpractice, premises liability ("slip & fall"), product liability, and slander/libel cases. While malpractice and product liability tend to garner the most attention among tort cases, they represent only 4 percent and 1 percent of tort caseloads, respectively, in these 20 states. Far more common are the automobile accident cases that account for 60 percent of all tort cases.

Civil Caseloads - Cont'd

Statewide Tort Caseload Composition in 20 States, 2016



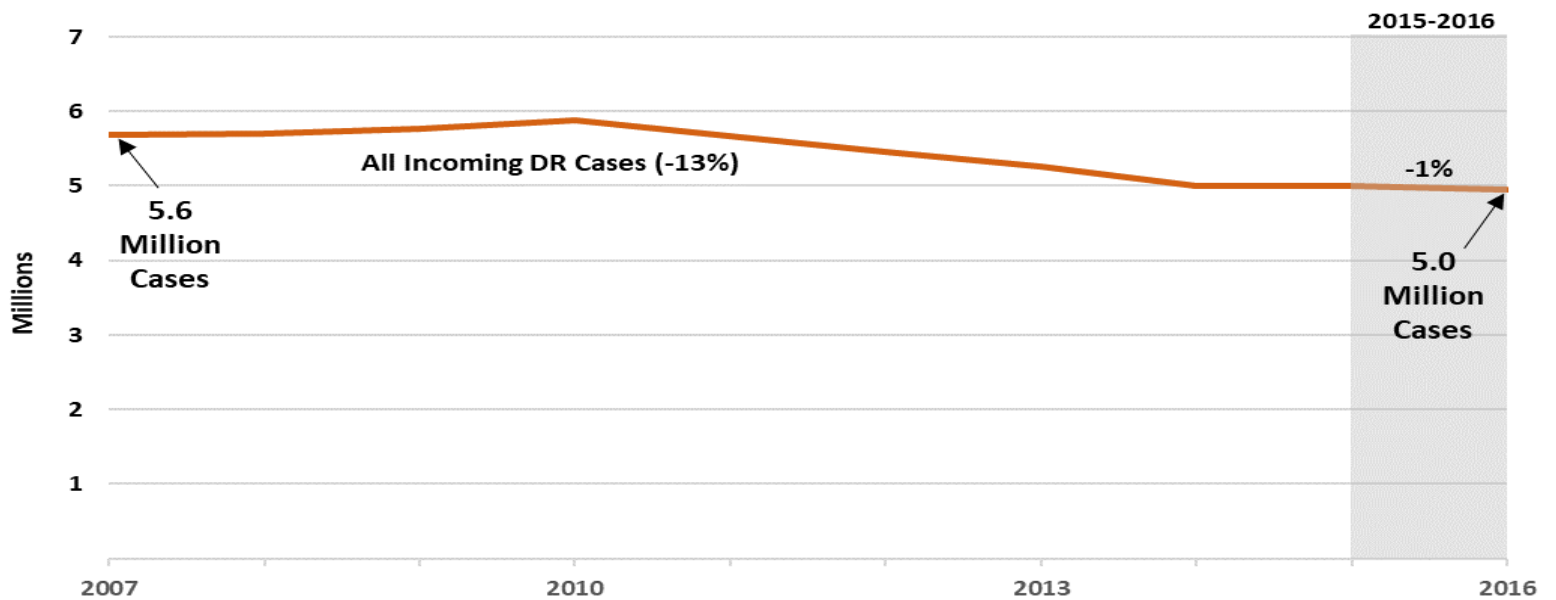
* Single-tiered court system

Other Tort include intentional torts, premises liability, slander/libel, and other torts.

When the tort caseloads from these 20 states are disaggregated, they appear more similar to each other than do contract caseloads. Automobile torts represent more than half the tort caseload in 13 of the 20 states, and malpractice and product liability cases never combine for more than 12 percent of any one state's tort caseload.

Domestic Relations Caseloads

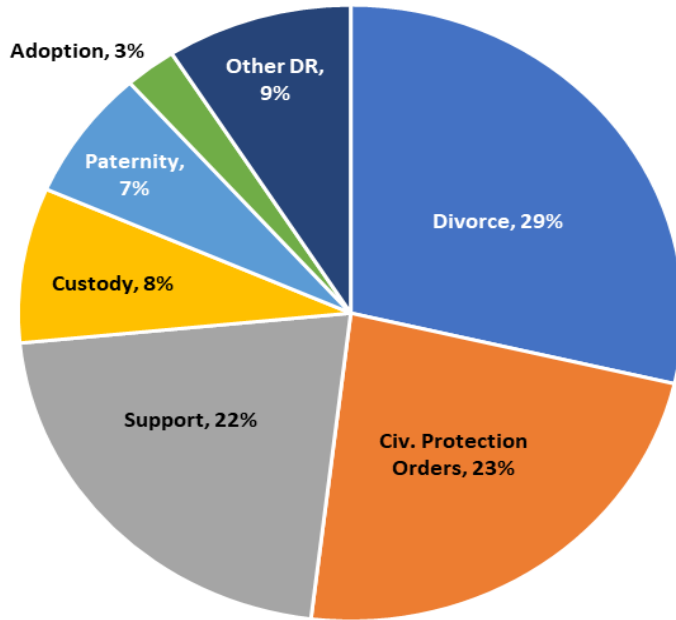
Total Incoming Domestic Relations Cases in State Trial Courts, 2007-2016



Like most other categories of trial court cases, Domestic Relations (DR) caseloads declined after 2010. However, beginning in 2014 DR caseloads stabilized and have been essentially unchanged for the last two years.

Domestic Relations Caseloads - Cont'd

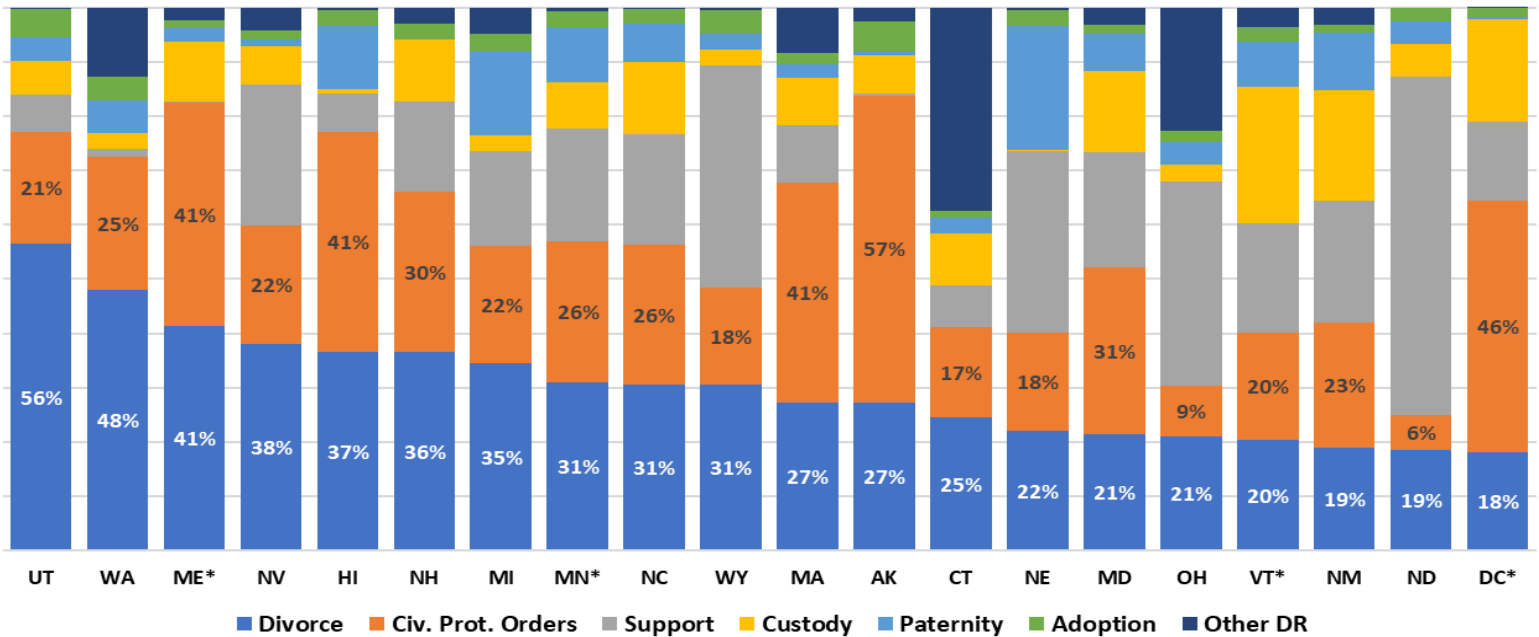
Domestic Relations Composition in 20 States, 2016



Slightly less than thirty percent of all Domestic Relations cases involve divorce or marriage dissolution cases. Civil protection orders (23%) have overtaken support cases as the second most common type of DR case.

States included in this graphic are: AK, CT, DC, HI, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, NC, ND, NE, NH, NM, NV, OH, UT, VT, WA, WY

Statewide Domestic Relations Caseload Composition in 20 States, 2016



* Single-tiered court system

Other DR includes visitation and other Domestic Relations cases.

Though divorce/dissolution cases often account for the largest proportion of Domestic Relations caseloads, half of these 20 states report percentages below the aggregate 29 percent, and six of these states (AK, DC, HI, MD, MA, NM) report more civil protection order cases than divorces.

Domestic Relations Caseloads - Cont'd

Divorce Caseloads and Rates in 41 States, 2016

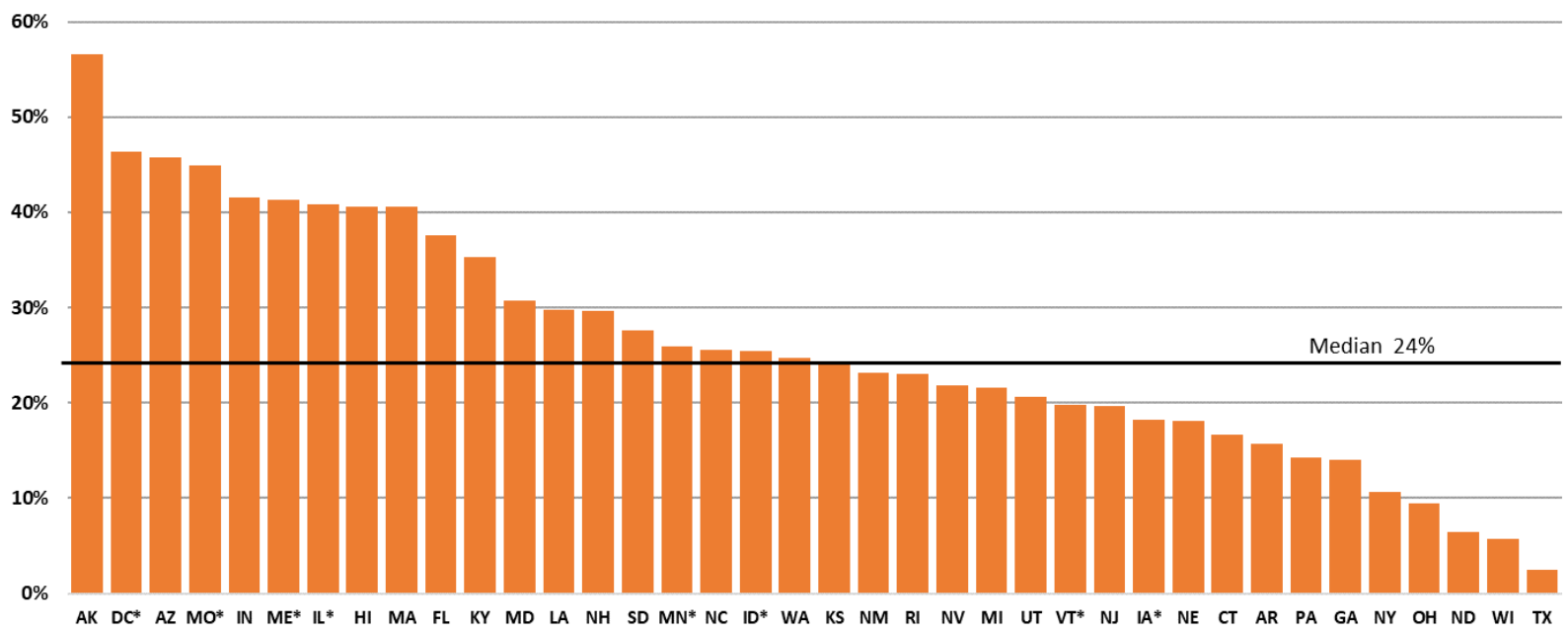
State	Incoming Divorce Cases	Percent of All Domestic Relations	Divorce Cases per 100k Adults
Nevada	21,491	38%	950
Arkansas	17,401	33%	762
Missouri*	33,377	28%	709
South Dakota	4,447	26%	682
Indiana	33,271	34%	658
Idaho*	8,056	35%	647
Wyoming	2,857	31%	640
Utah	13,534	56%	636
Texas	129,724	33%	631
Alabama	23,662	29%	628
Alaska	3,424	27%	617
Colorado	25,776	58%	602
Georgia	46,887	31%	601
Florida	91,101	39%	553
Kansas	11,722	34%	535
Illinois*	52,347	37%	530
Iowa*	12,738	37%	530
New Mexico	8,228	19%	517
Michigan	39,529	35%	511
New Hampshire	5,477	36%	510
Maryland	23,734	21%	508
Washington	28,716	48%	507
Maine*	5,432	41%	504
Nebraska	7,147	22%	498
Vermont*	2,482	20%	490
Ohio	42,883	21%	476
North Carolina	37,262	31%	475
California*	138,520	36%	459
Puerto Rico*	11,996	47%	442
Arizona	23,287	29%	439
Hawai'i	4,892	37%	437
Connecticut	12,171	25%	431
Wisconsin	19,152	41%	426
North Dakota	2,439	19%	419
District of Columbia'	2,307	18%	412
New Jersey	28,007	11%	402
Rhode Island	3,344	36%	394
Massachusetts	21,318	27%	392
Pennsylvania	38,070	11%	377
New York	57,240	10%	368
Minnesota*	15,378	31%	363
Minimum		10%	363
Median		31%	508
Maximum		58%	950

Forty-one states provided data that allows an examination of divorce as a proportion of all Domestic Relations cases. Though divorce cases typically account for about one-third of DR caseloads and occur at a rate of about 500 divorces for every 100,000 adults, this table displays how variable the percentages and population-adjusted rates can be.

* Single-tiered court system

Domestic Relations Caseloads - Cont'd

Civil Protection Order Cases as a Proportion of Domestic Relations Caseloads in 38 States, 2016

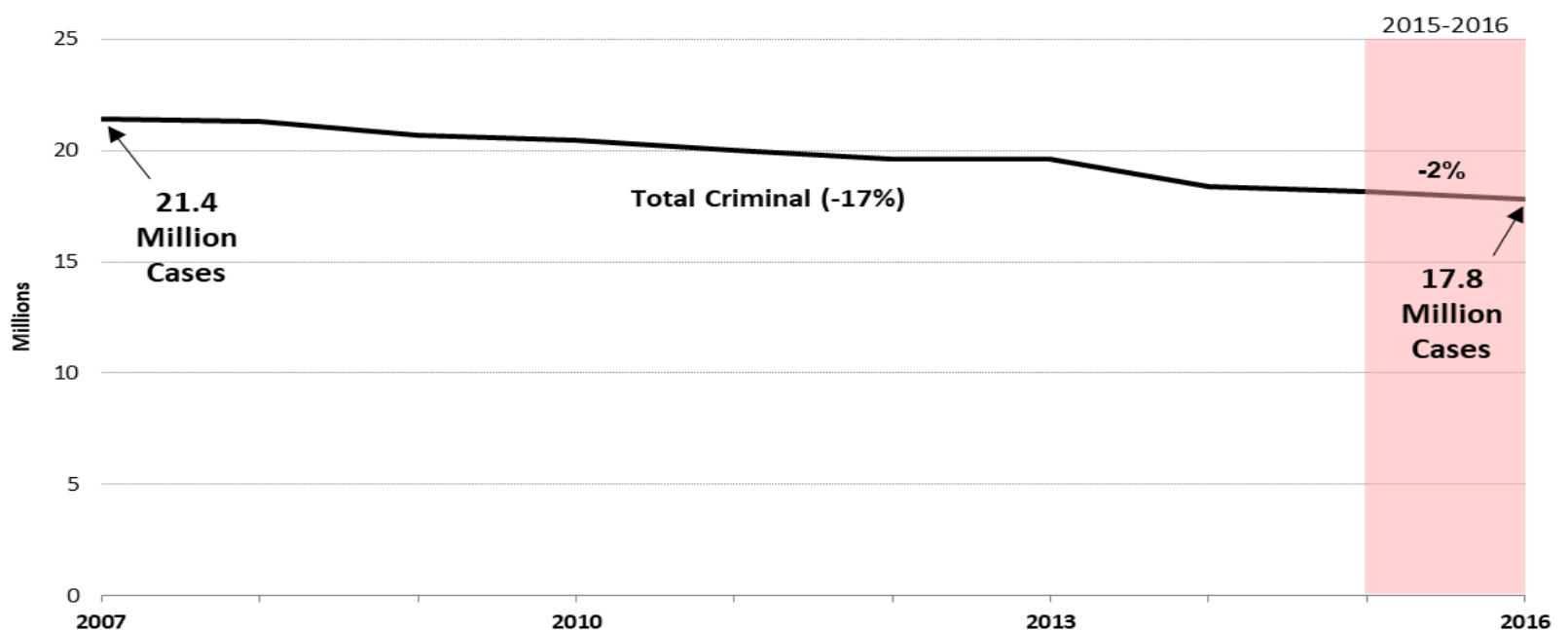


* Single-tiered court system

Civil protection orders—when reported under the Domestic Relations case category—describe cases in which the court issues a protection or restraining order that limits or eliminates contact between two or more individuals considered to be in a domestic relationship. These cases are different from those not involving a domestic relationship which are reported under the Civil case category. In these 38 states, civil protection order cases range from a high of 57 percent to a low of 3 percent of the total Domestic Relations caseloads. The median percentage for these states is 24 percent.

Criminal Caseloads

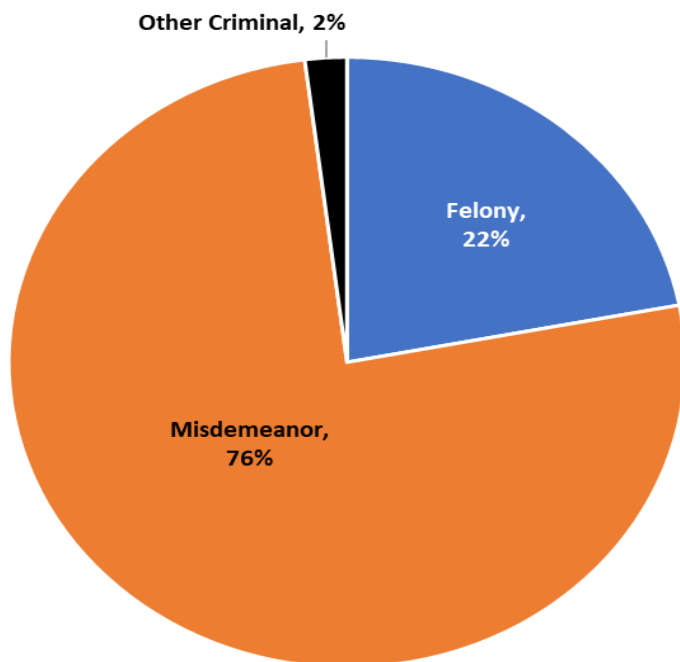
Total Incoming Criminal Caseloads Reported by State Courts, All States, 2007-2016



Criminal caseloads—which encompass felonies, misdemeanors, criminal appeals from limited jurisdiction trial courts, and other criminal cases—have declined at an average rate of -2 percent annually for the last 10 years. From 2015 to 2016, the decline was also -2 percent, consistent with the long-term trend.

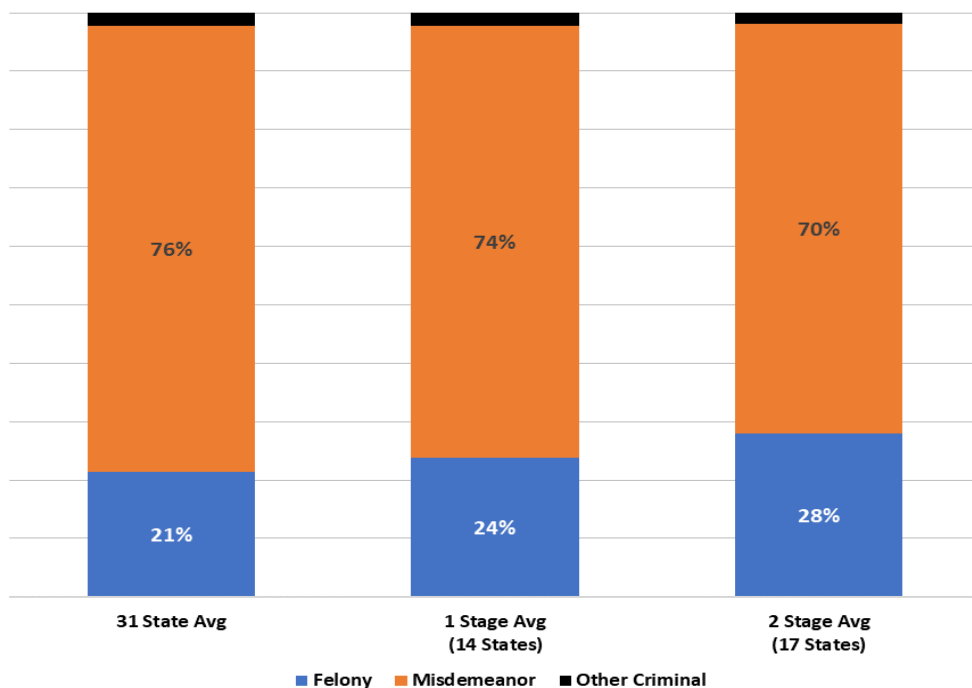
Criminal Caseloads - Cont'd

Statewide Criminal Caseload Composition in 31 States, 2016



Statewide Criminal data from 31 states indicate that more than three of four criminal cases in state trial courts are processed as misdemeanors, which are typically lower level crimes subject to fines and/or less than one year in jail.

Statewide Criminal Caseload Composition in 31 States, 2016



States use different approaches to processing felony cases. Single-tiered systems process the entire case start to finish in the same court in which it was filed. Some two-tiered states also use this approach, but others often begin felony processing in the limited jurisdiction tier for a preliminary hearing. If sufficient evidence is presented the case is typically "bound over" to the general jurisdiction court level for trial. This process correctly results in two filings: one in the lower tier and another in the upper tier. This chart shows that in the states where a two-stage process is used, felonies account for 28 percent of the Criminal caseload versus 24 percent in the states using a one-stage process.

States included in these graphics are:

AL, AK, AZ, CA, CT, DC, FL, HI, ID, IN, IA, KS, ME, MD, MA, MN, MO, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NC, OH, PA, RI, TX, UT, VT, WA, WI

Criminal Caseloads - Cont'd

Incoming Criminal Caseloads and Rates in 31 States, 2016

State	Total Incoming Criminal Cases	Percent			Criminal Cases per 100k Population
		Felony	Misdemeanor	Other	
States that Process Felonies in 1 Stage					
Texas	2,690,078	13%	86%	1.0%	9,655
Idaho*	91,027	23%	77%	0.2%	5,408
District of Columbia*	30,659	19%	81%	0.0%	4,501
Indiana	280,813	25%	53%	21.9%	4,234
Utah	126,734	19%	76%	5.2%	4,154
Iowa*	122,430	16%	84%	0.0%	3,906
Alaska	27,448	23%	77%	0.0%	3,700
Missouri*	222,995	48%	52%	0.7%	3,660
Maine*	46,957	14%	86%	0.3%	3,527
California*	1,364,529	20%	80%	0.2%	3,477
Florida	692,193	24%	76%	0.1%	3,358
Minnesota*	183,129	23%	77%	0.0%	3,318
Vermont*	16,060	21%	78%	0.8%	2,571
Kansas	47,013	46%	54%	0.8%	1,617
Average		24%	74%	2.2%	4,077
Median		22%	77%	0.3%	3,680
States that Process Felonies in 2 Stages					
North Carolina	1,503,283	18%	82%	0.0%	14,815
New Jersey	753,691	32%	68%	0.1%	8,426
Nebraska	150,404	27%	72%	1.2%	7,886
Arizona	537,068	21%	79%	0.0%	7,749
Nevada	201,920	32%	68%	0.1%	6,868
Ohio	766,771	22%	78%	0.0%	6,602
New Mexico	108,603	45%	44%	11.3%	5,219
Hawai'i	73,086	7%	93%	0.0%	5,116
Maryland	298,798	20%	80%	0.8%	4,966
Alabama	235,607	58%	39%	2.5%	4,845
Pennsylvania	498,186	27%	58%	14.5%	3,897
New Hampshire	45,622	33%	67%	0.0%	3,418
Washington	239,711	22%	77%	0.2%	3,289
Rhode Island	33,693	35%	64%	0.3%	3,189
Connecticut	109,996	19%	81%	0.1%	3,076
Massachusetts	198,796	23%	77%	0.5%	2,918
Wisconsin	110,725	35%	65%	0.0%	1,916
Average		28%	70%	1.9%	5,541
Median		27%	72%	0.1%	4,966

*Single-tiered court system

This table displays the individual states comprising the data on the previous chart. Though there is general consistency in the proportion of felonies and misdemeanors in each group, differences in crime rates, local legal culture, charging practices, resource allocation, and other factors result in some states reporting a higher or lower percentage of felonies than is typical for states that use a similar approach to felony case processing.

Criminal Caseloads - Cont'd

Criminal Caseload Clearance Rates in 23 States, 2016

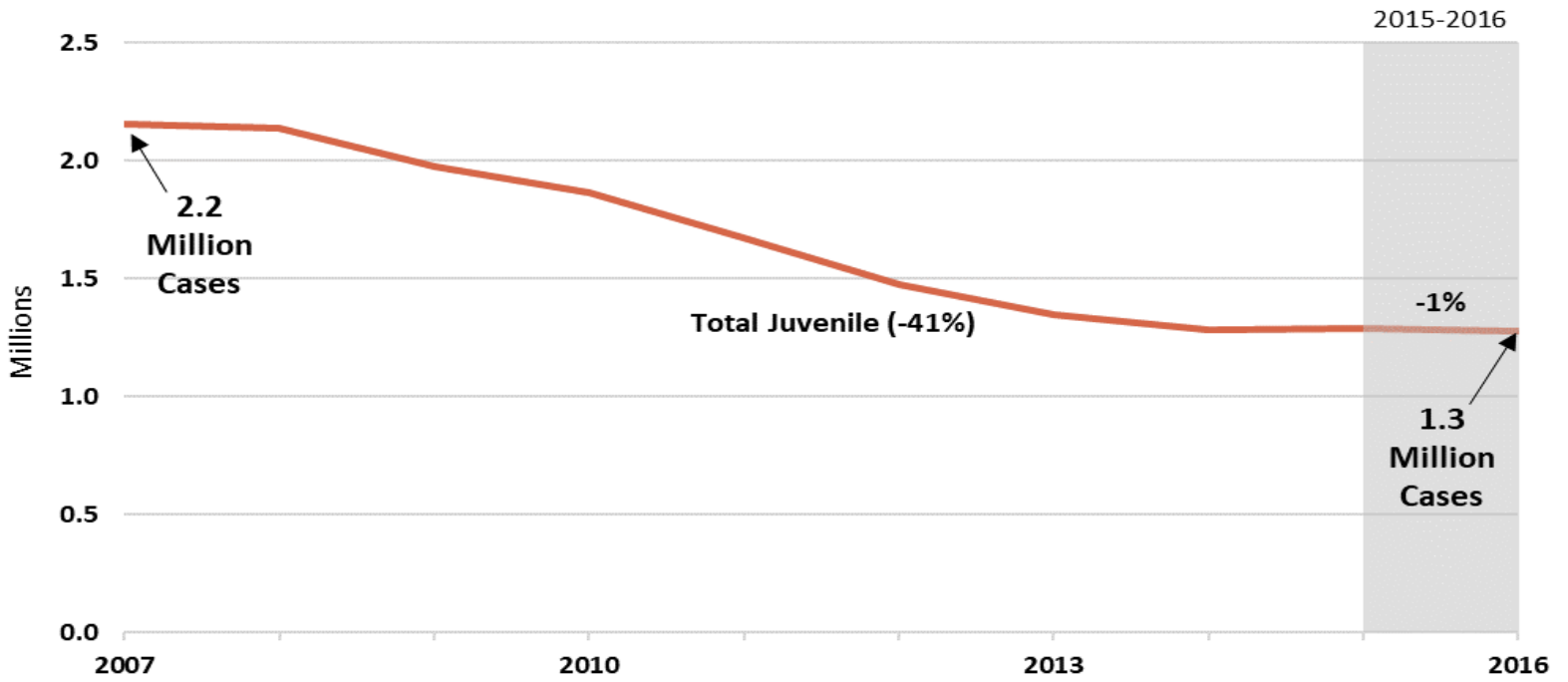
State	Incoming Criminal Cases	Clearance Rate		
		Felony	Misdemeanor	Total Criminal
New Mexico	108,603	120%	106%	115%
Arizona	537,068	110%	114%	113%
Washington	239,711	100%	114%	111%
Utah	126,734	96%	112%	108%
North Carolina	1,503,283	102%	109%	108%
Florida	692,193	99%	107%	105%
Nebraska	150,404	97%	105%	102%
Connecticut	109,996	106%	101%	102%
Ohio	766,771	100%	101%	101%
Alaska	27,448	98%	101%	101%
Texas	2,690,078	100%	100%	99%
Iowa*	122,430	95%	99%	99%
Wisconsin	110,725	96%	98%	97%
New Hampshire	45,622	96%	98%	97%
Alabama	235,607	94%	102%	97%
Missouri*	222,995	96%	95%	96%
Indiana	280,813	102%	93%	95%
Illinois*	286,567	95%	95%	95%
Hawai'i	73,086	100%	94%	95%
Vermont*	16,060	87%	96%	94%
Nevada	201,920	91%	94%	93%
New Jersey	753,691	98%	84%	88%
California*	1,364,529	92%	83%	85%

* Single-tiered court system

A clearance rate is calculated by dividing the number of outgoing cases in a jurisdiction by the number of incoming cases and expressing the result as a percentage. It is an indicator of whether a court is keeping up with its incoming caseload (rates of 100% or more) or if a potential backlog of cases is being created (<100%).

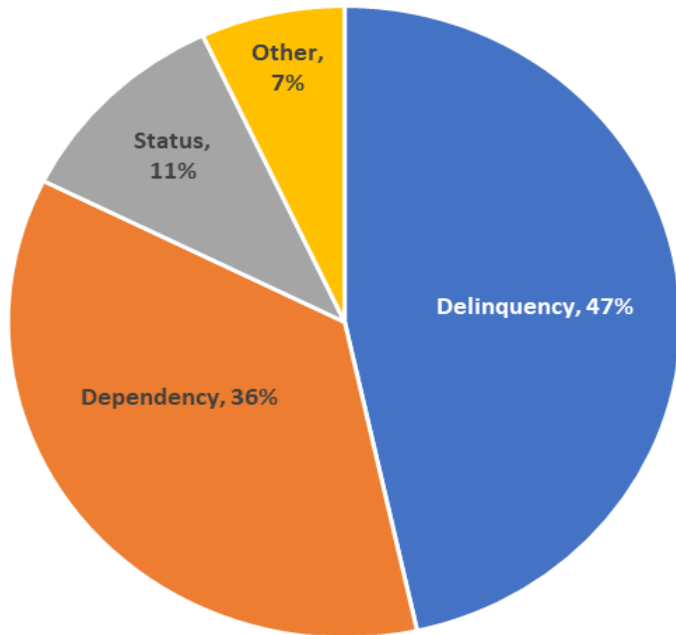
Juvenile Caseloads

Total Incoming Juvenile Caseloads Reported by State Courts, All States, 2007-2016



Juvenile caseloads—which include delinquency, dependency, and status offense cases—have declined (by percentage) significantly more than any other category of trial court cases. The reasons for this no doubt vary by state, but declines in the total Juvenile caseloads have been consistent among nearly all states.

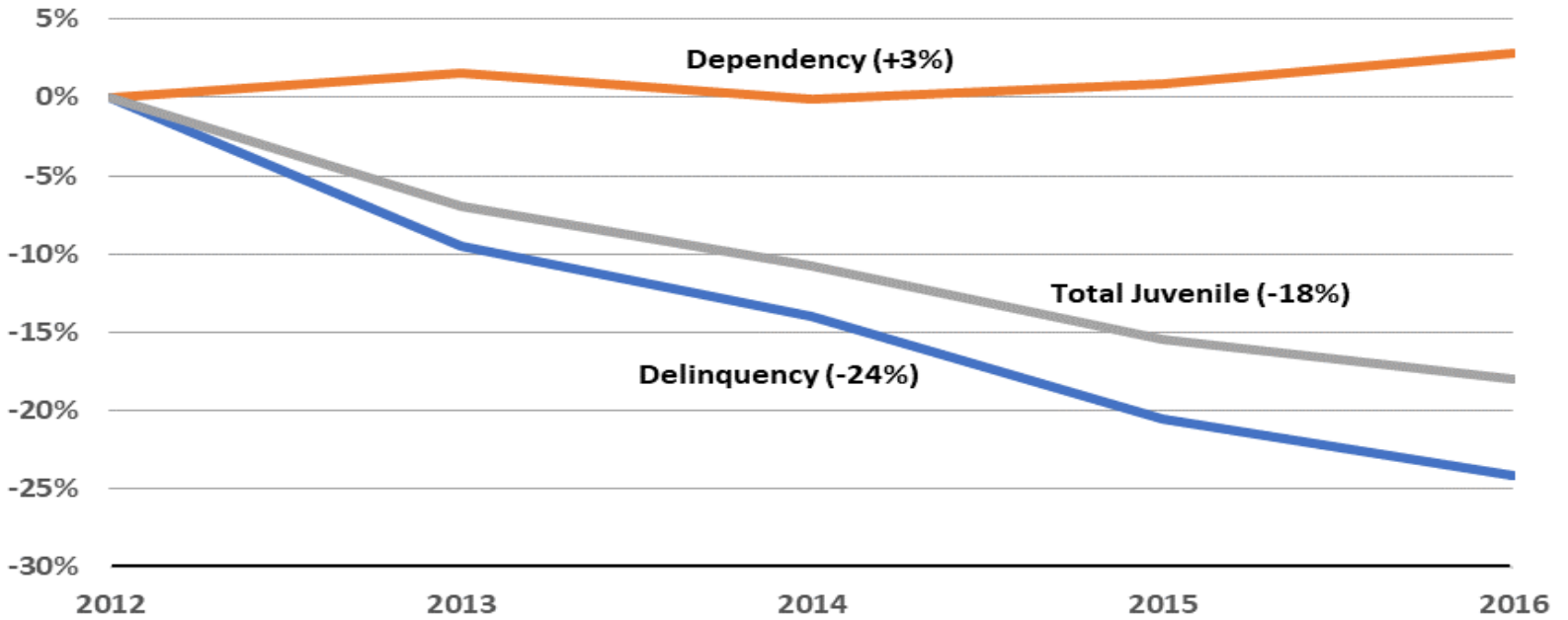
Juvenile Caseload Composition in 30 States, 2016



For the 30 states able to report an entire Juvenile caseload composition, nearly half of the caseloads comprise delinquency cases. Delinquency cases include drug, person, property, and public order offenses. Dependency caseloads include child abuse or neglect, no-fault dependency, and termination of parental rights.

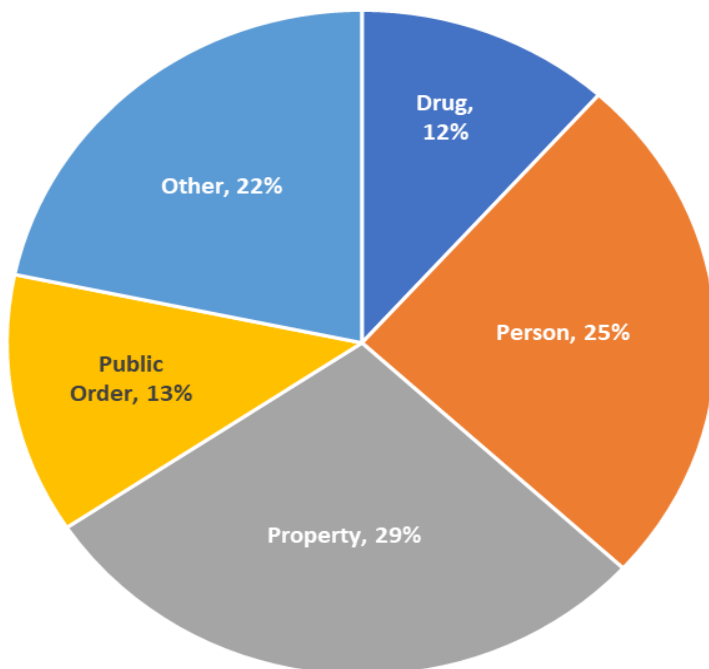
States included in this graphic are: AL, AR, AZ, CA, CT, GA, DC, HI, IN, KS, KY, MA, MD, MN, MO, NE, ND, NH, NJ, NV, NY, OH, PA, RI, SC, UT, VA, WA, WI, WV

Percent Change in Delinquency and Dependency Caseloads in 23 States from 2012



If a specific case type representing the majority of a broader case category exhibits significant declines and thereby drives an overall decline, it may obscure a contrary movement among other less common cases. Such is the case with delinquency and dependency cases in 23 states over the last 5 years. Delinquency declined by 24 percent during that time, driving an overall decrease of 18 percent in Juvenile cases. But over that same period, Juvenile dependency cases have increased by 3 percent.

Incoming Delinquency Case Composition in 20 States, 2016

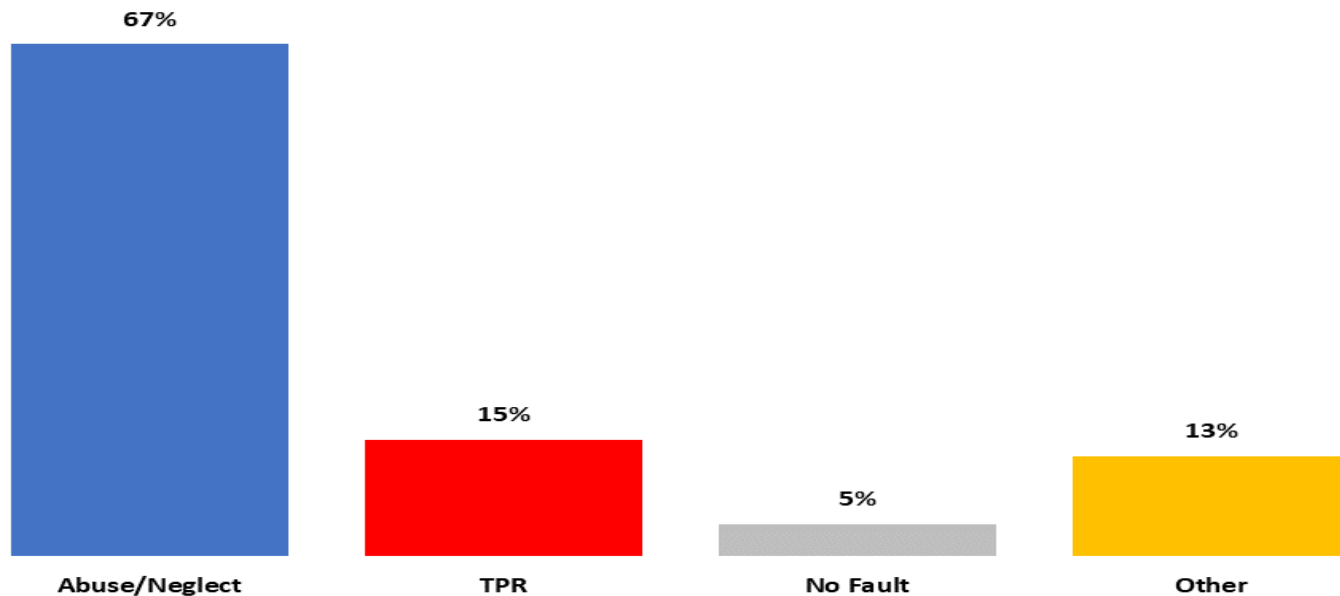


Juvenile delinquency cases account for nearly half of all Juvenile caseloads. They are the cases that deal with violations of the law, such as person (e.g., assault), property (e.g., trespassing or property damage), public order (e.g., disorderly conduct), drug offenses, and cases not falling into one of these other Juvenile case categories.

States included in this graphic are: AK, AL, AR, AZ, CO, CT, DC, KS, KY, MA, MD, NH, NM, NV, PR, SC, TX, UT, WA, WI

Juvenile Caseloads - Cont'd

Incoming Dependency Case Composition in 13 States, 2016

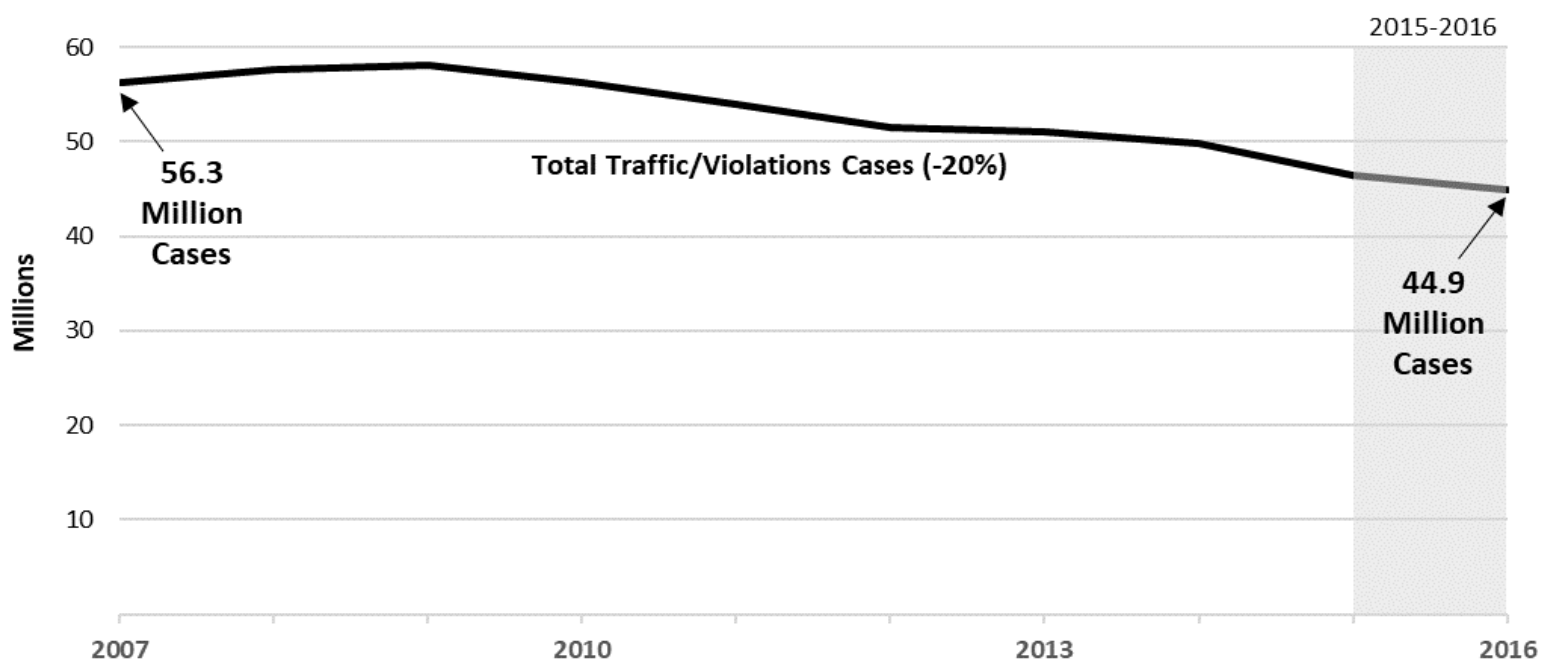


Dependency comprises Juvenile cases in which the minor is a victim or subject of the case rather than a defendant. Nearly 70 percent of Dependency cases reported by 13 states involve abuse or neglect of a child followed by termination of parental rights (TPR) at 15 percent.

States included in this graphic are: AK, CT, KS, MA, MD, MN, NE, NH, NJ, NV, RI, SC, UT

Traffic Caseloads

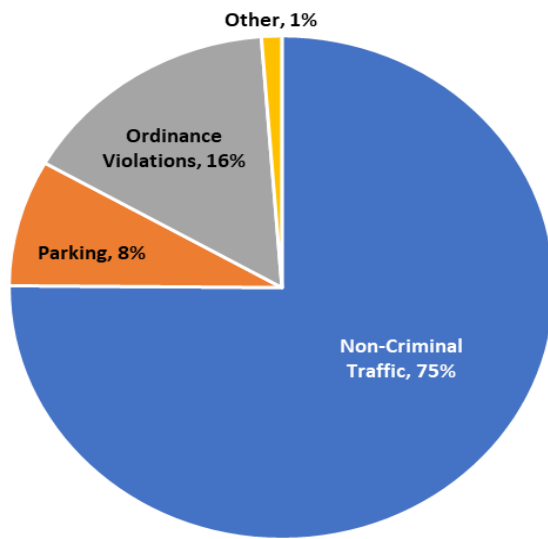
Total Incoming Traffic/Violations Caseloads Reported by State Courts, 2007-2016



Traffic/Violations cases comprised more than half (53%) of all cases processed in state trial courts in 2016. Per case, they typically consume a small proportion of court resources, but their sheer volume means that some courts may struggle to keep up with them. In the 10 years since 2007, the number of Traffic cases has declined by 20 percent, but in 2016 that still equated to nearly 45 million cases.

Traffic Caseloads - Cont'd

Incoming Traffic/Violations Caseload Composition in 23 States, 2016



Three of every four Traffic/Violations cases involve non-Criminal Traffic issues, such as moving violations, expired licenses, etc. Many states have moved parking caseloads out from under court control to administrative agencies, lowering the proportion of those cases to less than 10 percent.

States included in this graphic are: AK, AZ, CT, HI, IL, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, NC, NE, NH, NJ, NV, NY, OH, PA, PR, TX, UT

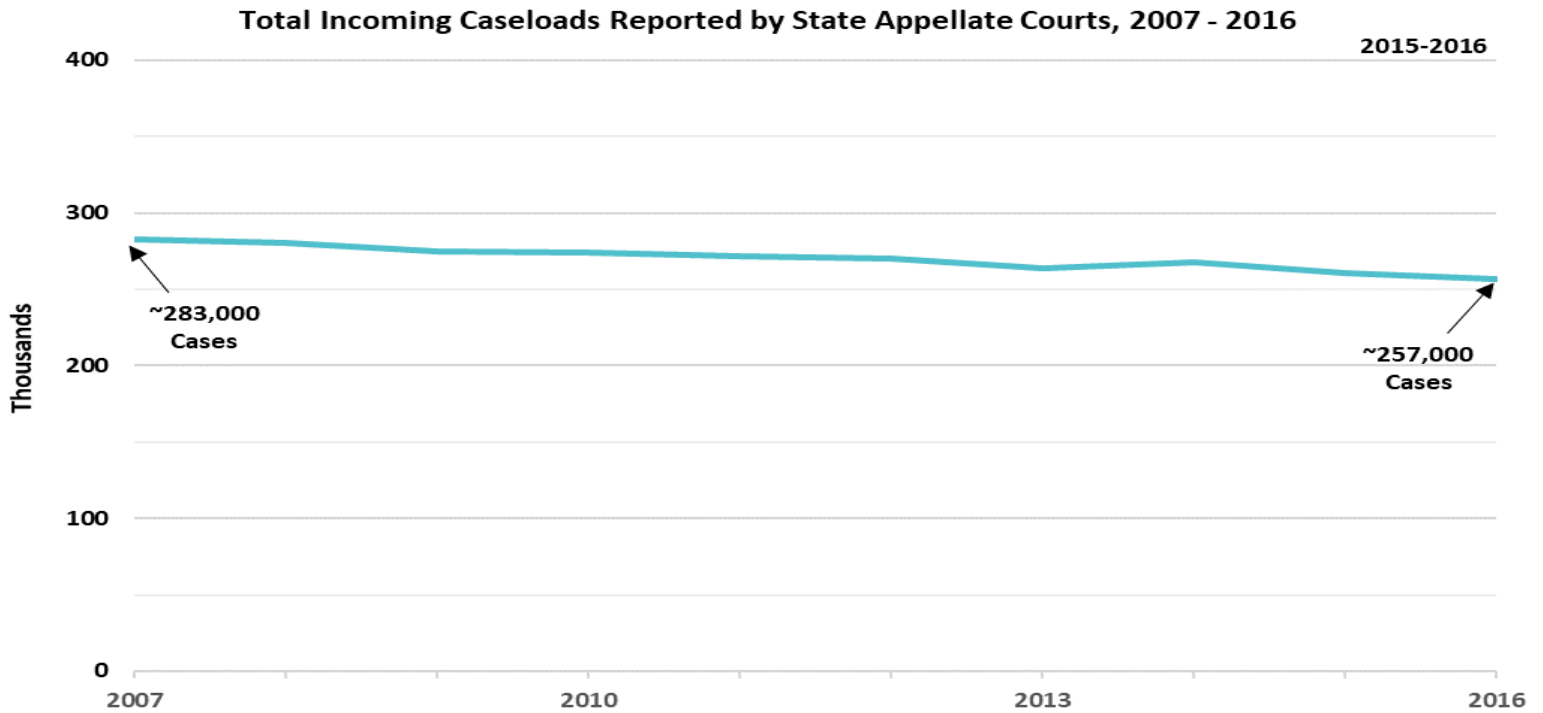
Traffic Caseload Clearance Rates in 28 States, 2016

State	Incoming Traffic/Violations Cases	Clearance Rate
Connecticut	338,818	112%
Hawai'i	384,800	111%
New Mexico	124,766	109%
Minnesota*	889,471	108%
Utah	364,693	107%
Arizona	956,821	106%
North Carolina	557,484	105%
Pennsylvania	2,246,509	103%
Nebraska	160,392	102%
Michigan	1,737,956	101%
South Carolina	868,708	101%
Texas	7,258,760	101%
Ohio	1,593,897	101%
Kentucky	235,860	101%
Puerto Rico*	8,743	101%
Virginia	1,290,741	100%
Iowa*	433,568	100%
New Jersey	5,206,012	100%
Indiana	524,170	100%
Florida	1,525,585	98%
Alabama	299,078	97%
Illinois*	1,678,901	97%
New Hampshire	35,670	95%
Alaska	55,305	91%
Nevada	479,521	91%
Missouri*	1,620,924	91%
New York	790,195	91%
California*	3,905,081	90%

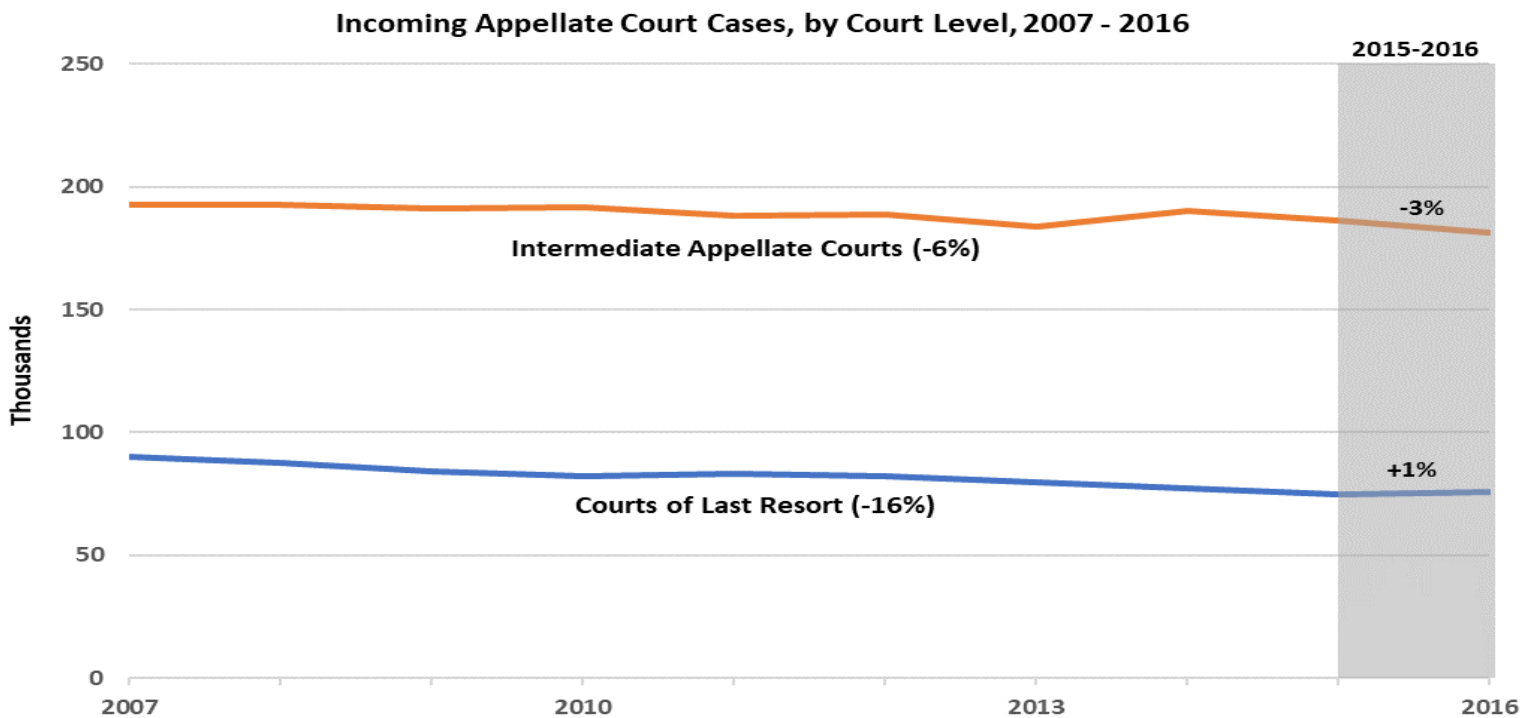
* Single-tiered court system

A clearance rate is calculated by dividing the number of outgoing cases in a jurisdiction by the number of incoming cases and expressing the result as a percentage.

Appellate Caseloads



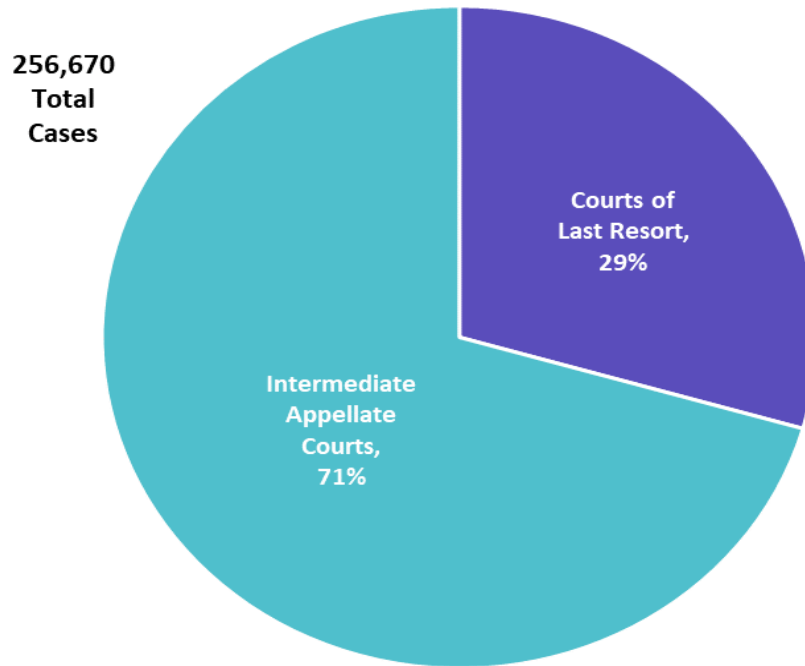
State appellate courts reported nearly 257,000 incoming cases in 2016. These include cases from Courts of Last Resort (COLR) as well as Intermediate Appellate Courts (IAC). Continuing the decrease reported in the previous year, state appellate court caseloads declined 2 percent again between 2015 and 2016. Over the 10-year period from 2007 to 2016, total appellate caseloads fell by 9 percent.



The percentage change in incoming caseloads between 2015 and 2016 differed for COLRs and IACs. For COLRs, incoming caseloads showed a slight increase of 1 percent to almost 76,000 in 2016. By contrast, incoming caseloads in IACs decreased from about 186,000 in 2015 to just over 181,000 in 2016 (-3%). Though total caseloads in both types of courts fell between 2007 and 2016, they did so at different rates with COLRs declining by 16 percent versus a decline of 6 percent in IACs.

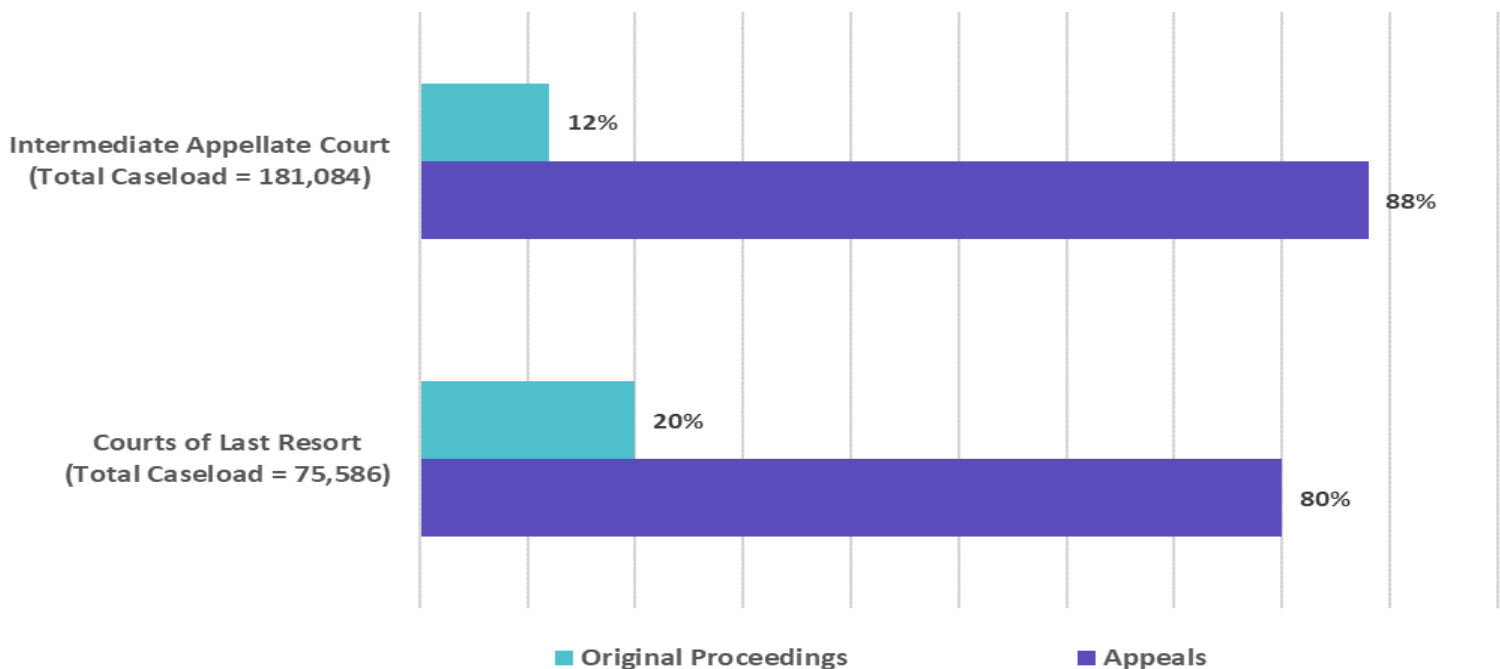
Appellate Caseloads - Cont'd

Distribution of Incoming Appellate Caseloads, 2016



Intermediate Appellate Courts process a volume of cases nearly 2.5 times that of courts of last resort. Twenty-nine percent of the total appellate courts caseload—just over 75,000 of the approximately 257,000 cases filed in 2016—were filed in Courts of Last Resort.

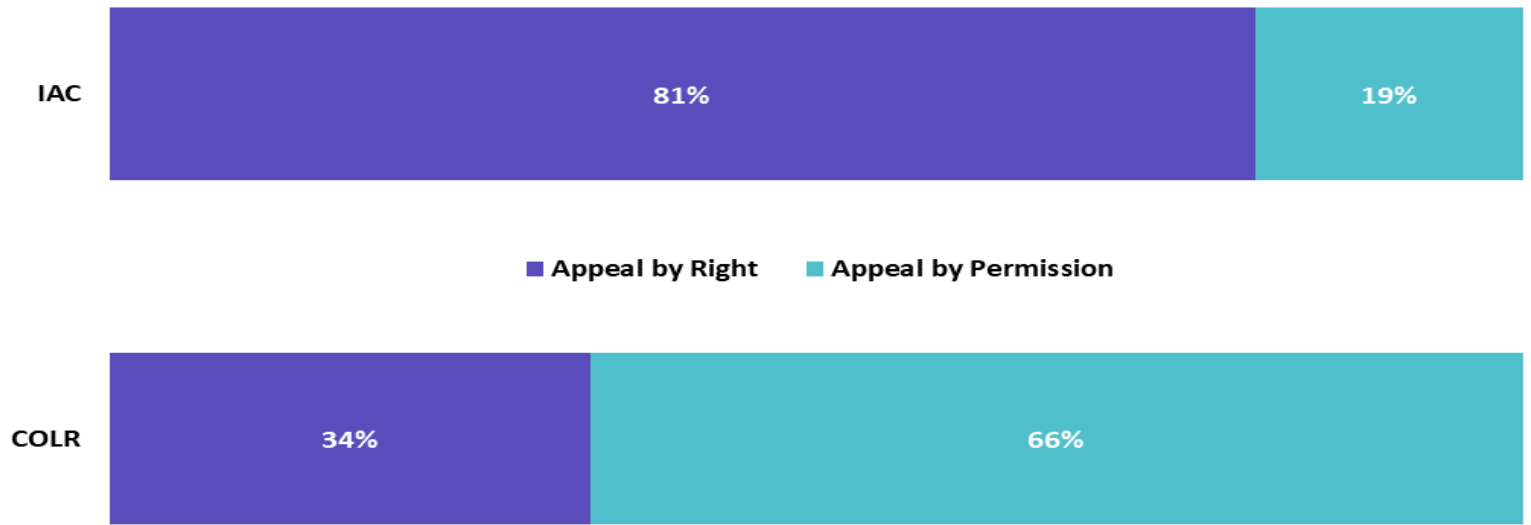
Distribution of Caseloads, by Case Category, 2016



Courts of Last Resort process a somewhat higher percentage of original proceeding cases than do Intermediate Appellate Courts as they are more likely to have jurisdiction for the licensing and disciplining of professionals such as judges, attorneys, interpreters, and guardians. They are also more likely to have jurisdiction for certified questions and advisory opinions, cases in which the court is asked to interpret or resolve a question of law.

Appellate Caseloads - Cont'd

Composition of Incoming Appeals in State Appellate Courts, 2016



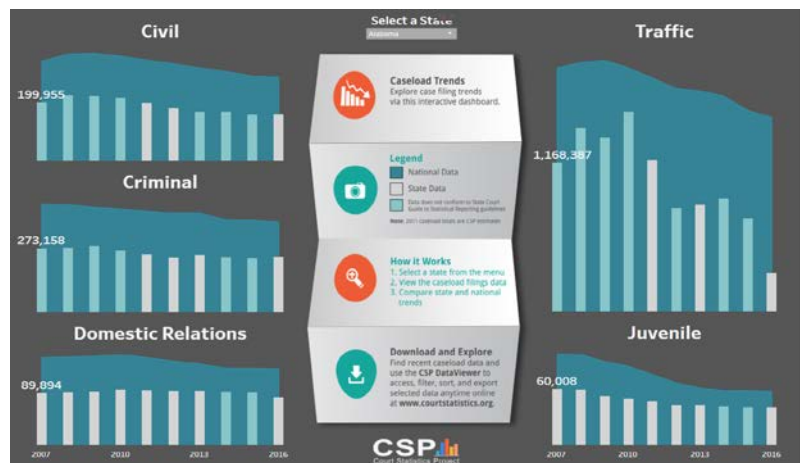
While both Courts of Last Resort and Intermediate Appellate Courts generally have jurisdiction for both types of review—appeals by right and appeals by permission—IACs tend to hear a considerably greater proportion of cases as a matter of right than do COLRs. In 2016, 4 of 5 cases (81%) in Intermediate Appellate Courts were appeals by right versus 1 in 3 cases (34%) in Courts of Last Resort.

Where to Get More Detailed CSP Data

This brief overview of state court caseload statistics is supplemented by more detailed information and analyses at the Court Statistics Project website, www.courtstatistics.org.

As part of the redesigned CSP reporting structure, detailed caseload data can be accessed at the CSP website using *DataViewer*. This interactive tool allows users to create custom views of state court statistics.

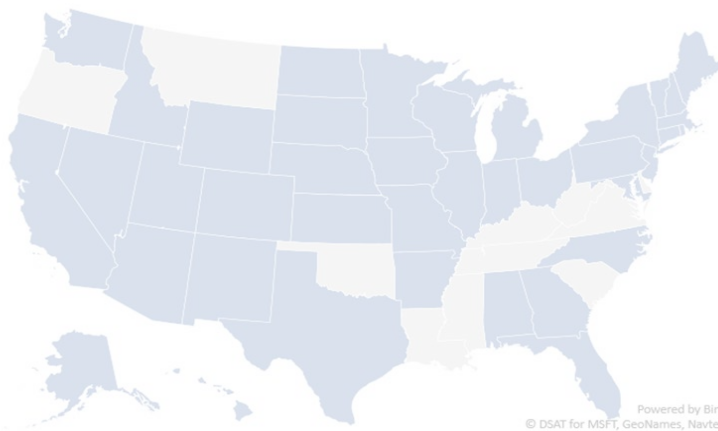
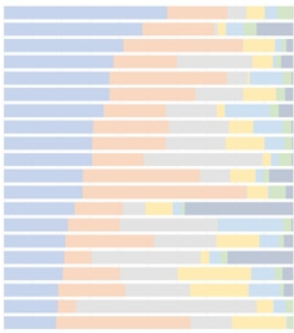
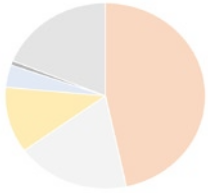
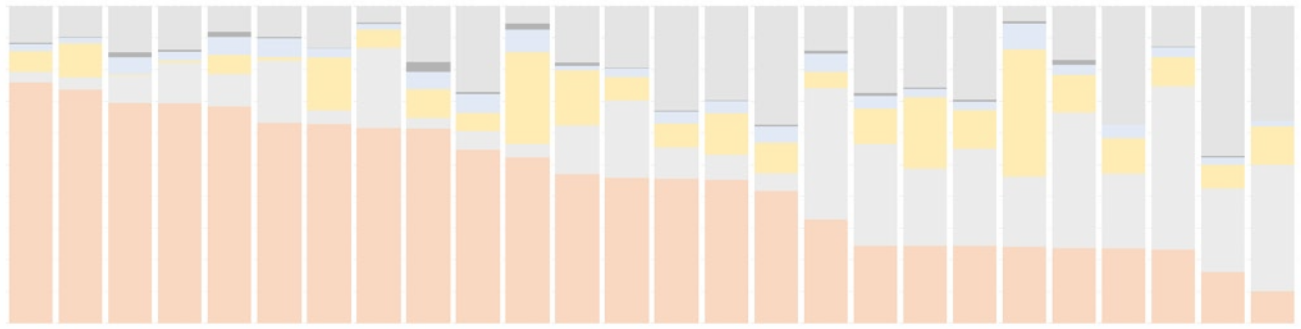
Using *DataViewer*, users can filter by state(s) or caseloads to create their own comparisons. To facilitate comparison, data can also be sorted. These user-defined views of the data can then be exported for use in reports and presentations.



CSP
Court Statistics Project

www.courtstatistics.org

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