

KANSAS JUDICIAL BRANCH FAST FACTS

December 2017

Public Safety

Courts are responsible for more than the occasional high-profile case that attracts public attention. Most of the 384,840 cases processed in Kansas district courts in FY 2017 involved everyday issues and problems that impact the lives and communities of ordinary Kansans.

The most vulnerable in our communities—abused and neglected children, battered women, and victims of vandalism and theft—seek protection from Kansas courts.



On average, every year Kansas district courts:

- * protect **6,900 children** who are in need of care by ruling on requests related to their safety and well-being;
- * protect **13,667 people** by issuing restraining orders;
- * dispose of **20,419 felony** cases and **14,351 misdemeanor** cases; and
- * supervise more than **18,000 convicted criminals** on probation including sex offenders.

Every day Kansas courts:

- * issue emergency orders in child in need of care cases;
- * hold emergency hearings in domestic matters;
- * issue search and arrest warrants to law enforcement agencies; and
- * convene first appearances and arraignments of those charged with crimes.

Judicial Branch Facts

- ❖ The Kansas Judicial Branch consists of more than 250 judges and justices and approximately 1,600 employees who pay mortgages and taxes and who purchase goods and services in Kansas communities.
- ❖ The Kansas Judicial Branch was recently ranked as the 18th most business friendly court system in the nation by the U.S. Chamber (of Commerce) Institute for Legal Reform. This is a drop from 5th in 2012. This drop may be connected to judge and staff turnover caused by salaries that are below market.



- ❖ The 2015 Legislature transferred oversight of the contracts for collecting restitution and debts owed to courts from the attorney general's office to the Judicial Administrator. The Judicial Administrator now manages debt collection standards and benchmarks for effective oversight of debt collection contracts.

Efficiencies Implemented by the Judicial Branch

In recent years the Judicial Branch has implemented several processes that make more efficient use of our resources and continues to strive for even greater efficiencies through several ongoing projects.

- ❖ **Electronic Filing**—Electronic filing (efiling) implementation statewide has resulted in streamlined procedures and more efficient operations. All courts have efiling capabilities; the appellate courts and approximately 80% of district courts have mandatory efiling. All district courts will move to mandatory efiling before the end of FY 2018.
- ❖ **Electronic Courts**—We also continue to develop and implement a statewide electronic court environment (eCourt) of which efiling is just one component. It includes a new centralized case management system. Work to standardize processes to allow for work sharing between judicial districts has begun. Use of eCourt technology will make access to courts easier and improve court efficiency.
- ❖ **Website Redesign**—In conjunction with eCourt, a new website is being developed for the Judicial Branch to allow Kansans to more easily access the many services we provide.
 - ❖ **Videoconferencing**—Increased use of videoconferencing by both district and appellate courts has reduced costs associated with travel and has protected the public in some cases, as inmates remain in a secure environment while exercising their right to a hearing.
 - ❖ **Personnel Studies**—Personnel savings have been achieved through the use of our caseload and position inventory analyses to make more efficient use of our personnel. Also, the Judicial Branch is currently conducting a workload study for court services officers (probation officers).



Judicial Branch Programs

- ◆ **Child Welfare Permanency Planning:** Citizen Review Boards (CRBs) and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs throughout Kansas are developed and monitored by the Office of Judicial Administration (OJA). Their purpose is to promote a permanent and safe home for each child.
- ◆ **Specialty Courts:** Specialty courts, such as veterans courts, drug courts, and truancy courts, exist throughout the state. The Supreme Court has adopted statewide operating standards through Supreme Court Rule.
- ◆ **Electronic Transmission of DUI and Criminal Dispositions:** The Judicial Branch electronically transmits DUI and other criminal dispositions to the KBI. This has improved the timeliness and accuracy of reporting criminal histories.
- ◆ **Self-Represented Litigants:** The Kansas Supreme Court's Access to Justice Committee is developing resources to help self-represented litigants navigate the court system and connect them with free or low-cost legal services when available.
- ◆ **Electronic Traffic Citation System:** The Judicial Branch partnered with the Kansas Highway Patrol to develop an electronic traffic citation system. District courts now retrieve Notices to Appear via a secure web portal.
- ◆ **Electronic Search Warrants:** Kansas courts work with law enforcement agencies to facilitate the use of electronic search warrants throughout Kansas, which increases efficiency by reducing fuel costs, wear and tear on law enforcement vehicles, and overall officer time involved in requesting and securing a warrant.
- ◆ **Municipal Court Support:** A special committee, appointed by the Supreme Court, is studying fines, fees, and bonding practices in all municipal courts. Also, annual training programs are provided to all municipal judges, impacting approximately 390 municipalities.

