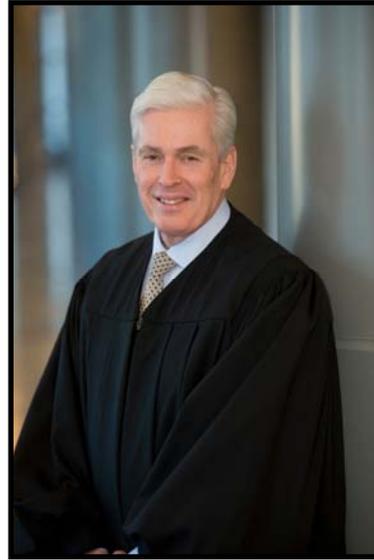


FAMILY COURT

CHIEF JUDGE MICHAEL K. NEWELL



FAMILY COURT

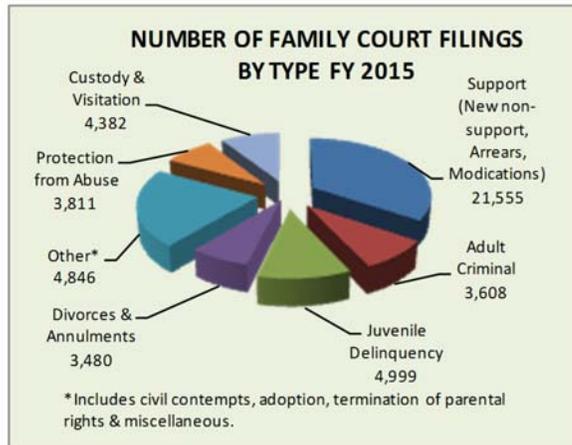
Family Court remains committed to its goal of providing equal access to justice for the families and children under its jurisdiction in a manner that is fair and efficient and that maintains the public's trust and confidence in an independent and accountable judiciary.

To support this goal, Family Court is participating in several initiatives aimed at improving systems and processes, including the Family Court Enhancement Project, sponsored by the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women, in collaboration with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the Battered Women's Justice Project, the Center for Court Innovation, and the National Institute for Justice. The Project is working to address the challenges identified by the group related to the ability of self-represented litigants to access justice in Family Court, and the complicated nature of identifying, understanding, and accounting for domestic violence in custody decision-making.

In partnership with the University of Delaware, several members of Family Court staff were trained in Lean Six Sigma principles so that process improvement initiatives could be managed using recognized methodologies aimed at reducing waste and inefficiency. Family Court

is applying the principles in conjunction with several projects related to Family Court operations.

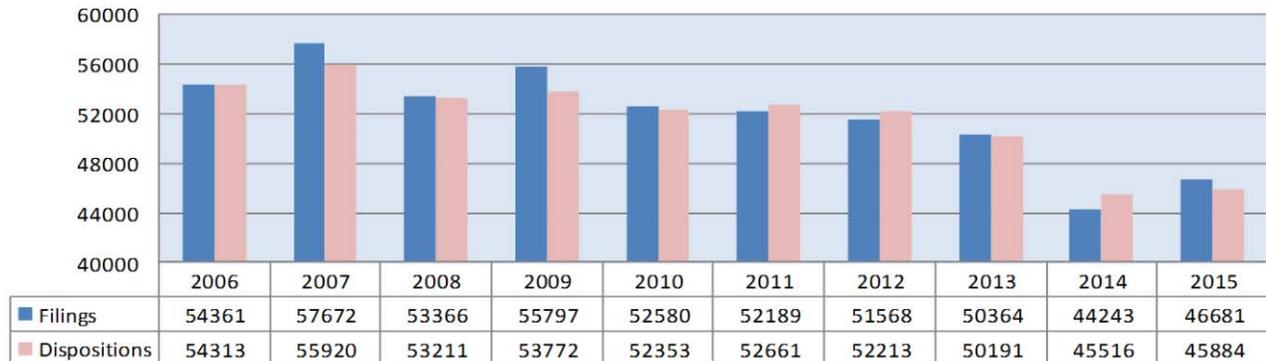
In addition, Family Court held statewide staff training in October 2015 entitled "Putting the Pieces Together—Service in the Judicial Branch." The training provided a history of the American court system, the rule of law and the history of Delaware Family Court. Staff discussed the purposes of courts and explored how their daily tasks serve to protect the due process rights of the public accessing the court system. Finally, staff examined the application and relevance of the Judicial Branch Code of Conduct related to common situations that arise while working in the court system.



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FAMILY COURT

FAMILY COURT CIVIL & CRIMINAL FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS BY FISCAL YEAR

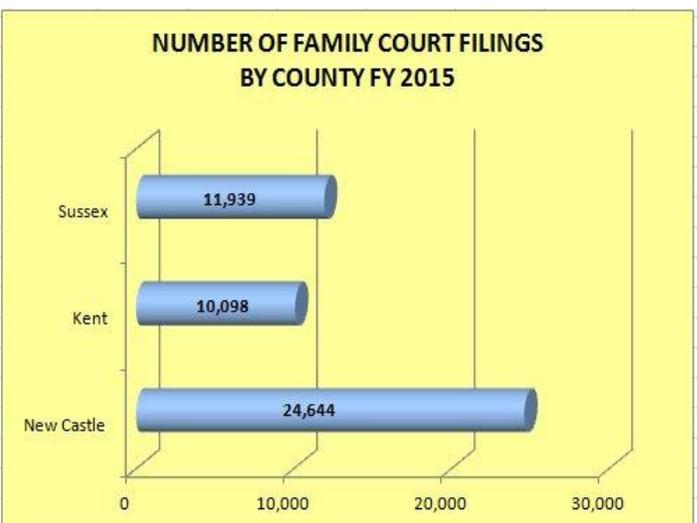


In February 2015 the Court Facilities Improvement Working Group issued its report reviewing court facility space needs in Kent and Sussex Counties and making recommendations. The group concluded that the need to address existing security and operational inadequacies in both Family Court’s Kent and Sussex Courthouses remains critical and the current Family Court facilities do not offer the dignified and secure facilities necessary. The group also concluded that a primary factor in the selection among several options to address the situation should be the continued accessibility of facilities to litigants and client populations in Kent and Sussex Counties and to maximize the ability of the Family Court to cost-effectively construct new court facilities. It is essential that the cities and counties involved cooperate as partners with the State in developing and constructing the new court facilities, according to the group. Five hundred thousand dollars was allocated in the FY16 Capital Budget “to be used towards preliminary costs, including planning and design and architectural and engineering work to address deficiencies in current Family Court facilities in Kent and Sussex Counties...”.

Fiscal Year 15 showed an 8% increase in civil filings in Family Court, a 2% decrease in juvenile delinquency filings and an 8% decrease in criminal filings. Family Court received more than 38,000 civil filings, almost 5,000 juvenile delinquency filings, and over 3,600 criminal filings. During this same period, the court disposed of almost 37,000 civil matters, more than 5,300 juvenile delinquency cases, and over 3,600 criminal matters.

In June 2015, former Chief Judge Chandlee Johnson Kuhn concluded her term as Family Court’s fourth Chief Judge and returned to private practice. The Honorable Michael K. Newell, was nominated by Governor Jack Markell and unanimously confirmed by the Delaware Senate on June 11, 2015, becoming the fifth Chief Judge of the statewide Family Court. Felice Kerr was nominated by Governor Markell to fill the vacancy left by Chief Judge Newell’s appointment to Chief Judge. On June 24, 2015, Judge Kerr was unanimously confirmed by the Delaware Senate. In addition, Family Court welcomed a new member to its Administrative Team with the promotion of Melissa Ziegler to Director of Operations in Kent County.

NUMBER OF FAMILY COURT FILINGS BY COUNTY FY 2015



FAMILY COURT



FAMILY COURT JUDGES

Front row (sitting left to right):

Judge Alan Cooper (1952-2015)
Judge Mark D. Buckworth
Judge Mardi Pyott
Judge Aida Wasserstein
Judge William N. Nicholas

Middle row (standing left to right):

Judge Felice Glennon Kerr
Judge Peter B. Jones
Judge Kenneth M. Millman
Judge William J. Walls
Judge Jay H. Conner
Judge Barbara D. Crowell
Judge Arlene M. Coppadge

Back row (standing left to right):

Judge Joelle Hitch
Judge William Chapman (retired
September 24, 2015)
Chief Judge Michael K. Newell
Judge Robert B. Coonin
Judge Paula Ryan

Not pictured: Judge Natalie J. Haskins, Judge Jennifer B. Ranji

The **Honorable Jennifer B. Ranji** was formally sworn in for her first term as a Judge of the Family Court of Delaware on November 24, 2015. Prior to her appointment to the Family Court, Judge Ranji served as the Secretary of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families. Judge Ranji replaced Judge William L. Chapman, Jr., who retired from the bench.

The **Honorable Natalie J. Haskins** was formally sworn in for her first term as Judge of the Family Court of Delaware on January 22, 2016. Prior to joining the bench, Judge Haskins was an Assistant Public Defender representing juveniles in criminal litigation. Judge Haskins was named to fill the vacancy that was created as a result of the death of the Honorable Alan Cooper.

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FAMILY COURT



FAMILY COURT COMMISSIONERS

Front row
(sitting left to right):
Louann Vari
Pamela Holloway
M. DeSales Haley

Second row
(standing left to right):
Sonja Wilson
Para Wolcott
Angela Fowler
Janell Ostroski
Mary Ann Herlihy
(retired November 1, 2015)
Loretta Young

Third row
(sitting left to right):
Andrew Southmayd
Jennifer Mayo
David W. Jones
Susan Tussey
John Carrow

Fourth row
(standing left to right):
Mary Much
Chief Judge Michel K. Newell
James Maxwell

Not pictured: Danielle S. Blount

The **Honorable Danielle S. Blount** was formally sworn in for her first term as Commissioner of the Family Court of Delaware on January 29, 2016. Prior to joining the Family Court, Blount served as Governor Jack Markell's deputy legal counsel.

FAMILY COURT

IN MEMORIAM THE HONORABLE ALAN N. COOPER



The Honorable Alan N. Cooper served as a Judge of the Family Court from 2005 until his passing on October 18, 2015. Judge Cooper practiced law in Wilmington, Delaware from 1985 until he was appointed to the bench, and was a founding partner at the law firm of Berkowitz, Schagrin & Cooper, P.A., which he earned the reputation as one of Delaware's most respected family law practitioners. While in private practice he gave generously of his time as a volunteer for Delaware Volunteer Legal Services, the Office of the Child Advocate, and the victim's Advocacy Program, and was the recipient of the Delaware Volunteer Legal Services Outstanding Pro Bono Service award in 2002. He carried his sense of commitment to the community with him to the Family Court, leading many of the court's initiatives for system change, particularly in the area of domestic violence. He was an active member of a number of national and local professional organizations, including the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the Delaware State Bar Association and its Family Law Section, and the Melson Arsht Inn of Court.

"Judge Cooper was a special person. He approached each day of his difficult job as a Family Court judge with enthusiasm and passion and a gratitude for being able to make a difference. Alan gave up one of the best practices in Delaware to become a judge because of his deep concern for families, especially vulnerable children. His intelligence, patience, and skill as a judge greatly enhanced the reputation of our Family Court." - Supreme Court Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr.

"Judge Cooper was a member of the Family Court Judiciary since December 7, 2005, and served the citizens of Delaware with distinction. His intellect, compassion, and concern for the parties who appeared before him were reflected in his many well written decisions. He also led Family Court's initiatives with respect to issues of domestic violence. His leadership resulted in many changes as to how Family Court processed and resolved petitions for Protection from Abuse. We, in the Family Court, and the citizens of Delaware, will reap the benefits from Judge Cooper's accomplishments during his too-brief tenure on the Family Court bench for years to come. We continue to miss his leadership, hard work, good humor, and positive personality." - Chief Judge Michael K. Newell