

The Family Court has extensive jurisdiction over virtually all family and juvenile matters. All civil appeals, including those relating to juvenile delinquency, go directly to the Supreme Court while adult criminal cases are appealed to the Superior Court. The Constitution of Delaware, Article IV, Section 1, establishes the Family Court.

# *Family Court*



**Chief Judge**  
***Michael K. Newell***

## *By the Numbers*



### FAMILY COURT

- Judges - 18
- Commissioners - 16
- Court Staff - 307

TOTAL: 341



## Family Court Judges

Seated, Front Row (Left to Right):

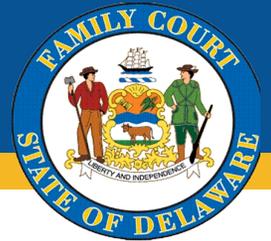
Judge Arlene Minus Coppadge • Judge Mardi F. Pyott • Judge Louann Vari  
Judge James G. McGiffin, Jr. • Judge Mary S. Much • Judge Janell S. Ostroski • Judge Felice G. Kerr

Standing, Back Row (Left to Right):

Judge Paula T. Ryan • Judge Jennifer B. Ranji • Judge Peter B. Jones • Judge Theresa M. Hayes  
Chief Judge Michael K. Newell • Judge Joelle P. Hitch • Judge Michael W. Arrington  
Judge Natalie J. Haskins • Judge Mark D. Buckworth • Judge Eliza M. Hirst

Not Pictured:

Judge Jennifer S. Donahue



## Family Court Commissioners

Seated, Front Row (Left to Right):

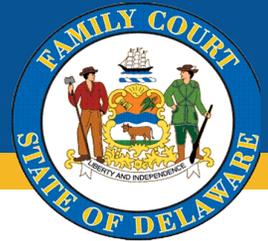
Commissioner Candace E. Holmes • Commissioner Meghann O'Reilly Karasic  
Commissioner Para K. Wolcott • Commissioner Sonja Truitt Wilson • Commissioner Theresa A. Sedivec  
Commissioner Gretchen C. Gilchrist • Commissioner Emily A. Farley

Standing, Back Row (Left to Right):

Commissioner Elizabeth C. Fillingame • Commissioner Francis E. Mieczkowski, III  
Commissioner Andrew K. Southmayd (retired 10/2025) • Chief Judge Michael K. Newell  
Commissioner Jessica B. Markowski-Kelly • Commissioner James J. Maxwell  
Commissioner Mary E. Batten

Not Pictured:

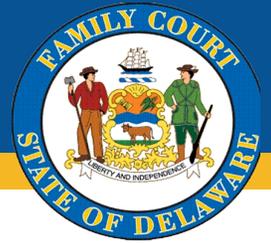
Commissioner Craig R. Fitzgerald  
Commissioner Jennifer L. Mayo  
Commissioner Danielle S. Blount  
Commissioner Mark Hudson



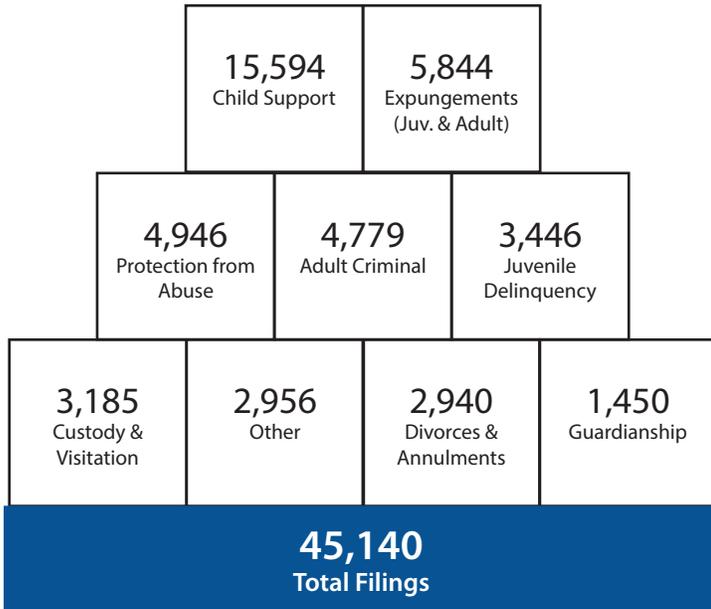
## 2025 Highlights

- The new Sussex County Family Court building in Georgetown opened to the public in November 2025. This is an important milestone for Family Court and the citizens of Sussex County. Many months of detailed planning ensured a smooth transition to the new facility with minimal disruption to public facing services.
- Family Court continues to work with construction teams on completion of the new Kent County Family Court courthouse in Dover, expected to open in the summer of 2026.
- Family Court welcomed the Honorable Jennifer Donahue, as a fourth Judge now assigned to Sussex County on 6/18/25.
- Family Court also welcomed three new commissioners: the Honorable Meghann O. Karasic in New Castle County on 4/17/25, the Honorable Mary E. Batten in Sussex County on 6/25/25, and the Honorable Elizabeth Fillingame in New Castle County on 7/11/25.
- The court worked on new processes to effectuate service in civil cases, with a focus on a process that provides optimal customer service and early interaction with judicial officers. This effort also led to numerous “blitz” calendars to move cases forward that had been awaiting service.
- The court continued with its training efforts for new staff and supervisors and has continued to improve its onboarding process to set new staff up for success.
- Family Court experienced a substantial increase in expungements this last fiscal year, over 3,400 more than FY 24, or a 145% increase.
- Family Court’s PFA Compliance Calendar continued to grow this fiscal year with 79 more entries into the program than last fiscal year. This calendar remains a specialized calendar in all three counties that was created to increase engagement and completion of domestic violence intervention treatment by PFA respondents ordered to have a domestic violence evaluation. There are currently over 200 cases in the program, and it is a critical effort to help address domestic violence in Delaware.
- Family Court has focused on training new members of the court’s Administrative Team throughout 2025, as several new members have joined the team in key leadership positions. This is a lengthy process, given the depth and breadth of Family Court’s jurisdiction.

# FAMILY COURT



## Number of Family Court Filings by Type Fiscal Year 2025



## Number of Family Court Filings by County Fiscal Year 2025



## Family Court Civil and Criminal Filings and Dispositions by Fiscal Year

