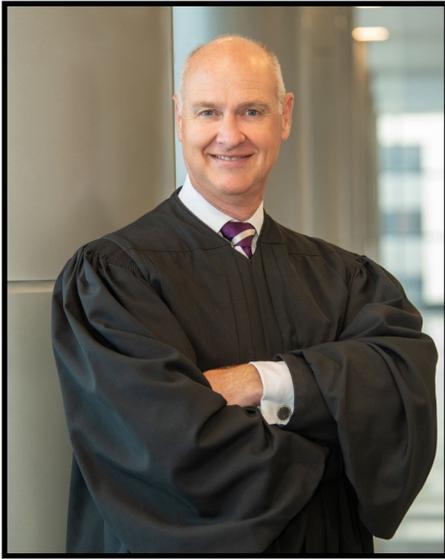


COURT OF COMMON PLEAS



CHIEF JUDGE CARL C. DANBERG

Fiscal Year 2023 marked the 50-year anniversary of the state-wide Court of Common Pleas. Since its inception in 1973, the Court of Common Pleas has been resolute in its goal of providing the citizens of the First State a fair and neutral forum for the efficient resolution of legal matters. FY 23 was no exception; faced with staffing shortages and a notable increase in case filings, the Court of Common Pleas worked closely with the community, its justice partners, and across the judiciary to ensure that access to justice remained strong throughout the state.

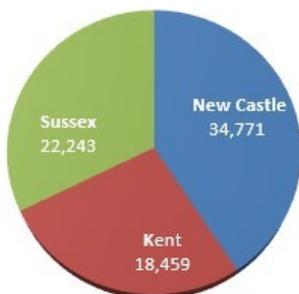
In FY 23, the combined efforts of Delaware's state courts proved to be greater than the sum of its parts. The Court of

Common Pleas worked alongside Superior Court, Family Court, and the Justice of the Peace Court to execute the Delaware Courts' Safe Surrender event. Thanks to the hard work of our dedicated staff and remarkable community participation, the Court of Common Pleas resolved nearly 300 outstanding capiases in a single day.

Also in FY 23, the Court of Common Pleas worked closely with Superior Court to create efficiencies in certain specialty court programs. The Court of Common Pleas Drug Court was consolidated with the Superior Court Drug Court into one adult Drug Court, which is administered in the Court of Common Pleas. The Mental Health Court was also advanced by the collaboration between the Court of Common Pleas and Superior Court. With the retirement of Superior Court Judge Andrea Roccanelli, Court of Common Pleas Judge Katharine Mayer was designated to preside over Superior Court Mental Health Court until a Superior Court Judge was able to resume the role. These cross-court efforts streamlined the process for participants and allowed for consistent judicial oversight, a critical function in treatment-focused court programs.

Continued on next page

**COURT OF COMMON PLEAS CIVIL & CRIMINAL
FILINGS BY COUNTY FISCAL YEAR 2023**



COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

The Court of Common Pleas is proud to have served the citizens of the State of Delaware for the past 50 years, and will continue to adapt and evolve to ensure that access to justice remains strong in the First State.

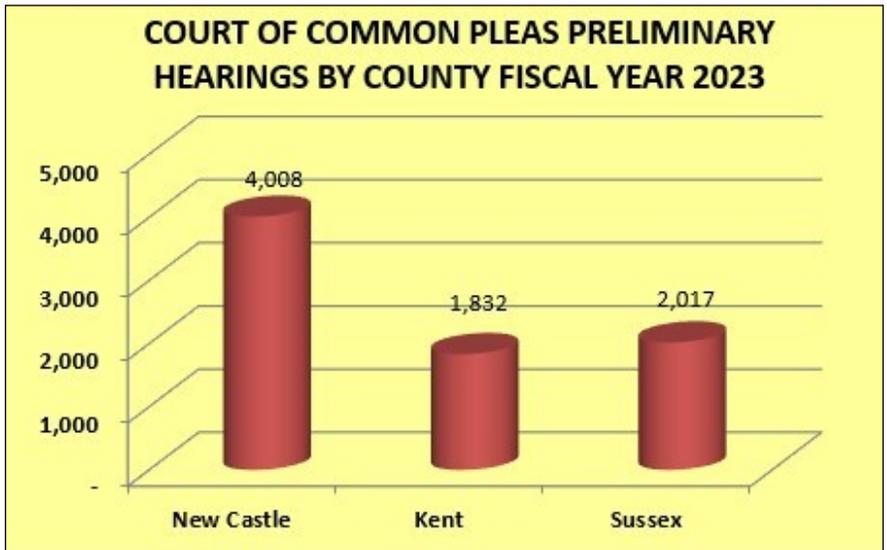
Statistical Overview

The Court of Common Pleas has continued to be one of the busiest courts in the State of Delaware with over 98,021 total case filings in FY 23 – an increase of 8.7% over FY 22.

The Court of Common Pleas saw a decrease in total civil case filings, down 9% from FY 22. The decrease in total civil filings was primarily attributable to a reduction in appeals and civil complaints; however, consumer debt filings increased by 3.4% and name change petitions increased by 38.6% compared to FY 22.

Criminal case filings increased significantly in FY 23. A total of 90,410 misdemeanor criminal cases were filed in the Court of Common Pleas, and 7,857 cases were before the court for a preliminary hearing. These figures represent a 10.5% increase in criminal misdemeanor filings and a 9.7% increase in total criminal caseload compared to FY 22. Additionally, the growth rate of more complex criminal cases, such as drug and alcohol cases, has consistently outpaced

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS PRELIMINARY HEARINGS BY COUNTY FISCAL YEAR 2023



other criminal filings. Over the past 10 years, Statewide DUI cases increased 87.5% – growing from 1,970 to 3,693 – between FY 13 and FY 23. In Sussex County, the portion of the court’s caseload consisting of misdemeanor drug cases has doubled, from 5% of the county’s total caseload to 11%, between FY 13 and FY 23.

The Court of Common Pleas Mediation Program continued to distinguish itself as a valuable resource for criminal disputants, civil litigants, and the community at large, providing a forum for justice through negotiated resolution and acceptance of responsibility, rather than prosecution. In FY 23 there were 853 cases referred for mediation statewide, and the Program boasted an impressive statewide success/satisfaction rate of 91%.

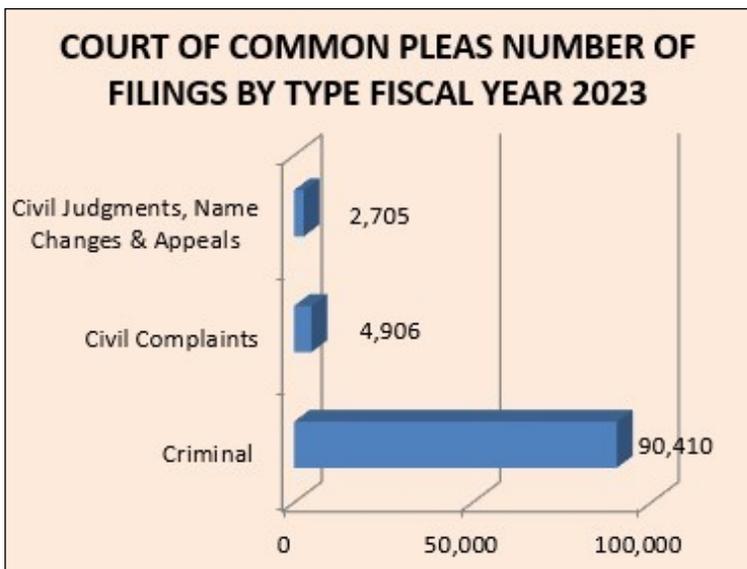
Problem-Solving Courts

The Court of Common Pleas is proud of its problem-solving courts, which provide court-monitored treatment and access to social services designed to minimize the likelihood of reoffending.

♦ Drug Diversion Program

The Court of Common Pleas continues to operate its highly successful court-supervised Drug Diversion Program, headed by Judge Robert Surles in New Castle County, Judge Anne Hartnett in Kent County, and Judge Kenneth Clark in Sussex Coun-

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS NUMBER OF FILINGS BY TYPE FISCAL YEAR 2023



COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

ty. The Drug Diversion Program represents a collaborative effort between the court, its justice partners, and the Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC). Collaboration with PHMC provides observation, research, and data analysis, which has assisted in launching scores of other drug diversion programs throughout the United States and internationally. The Drug Diversion Program has served 9,191 since its inception in 1998, and the program is continuing to grow and adapt with national best practices.

◆ DUI Treatment Court Program

The Court of Common Pleas continues to operate the statewide DUI Treatment Court Program, under the direction of Judge Monica A. Horton in New Castle County, Commissioner Gregory Babowal in Kent County, and Commissioner Donald Bucklin in Sussex County. Since its inception in December 2014, 435 individuals have entered the Program, with 327 having successfully completing the program. In FY 23, there were 69 active participants in the program.

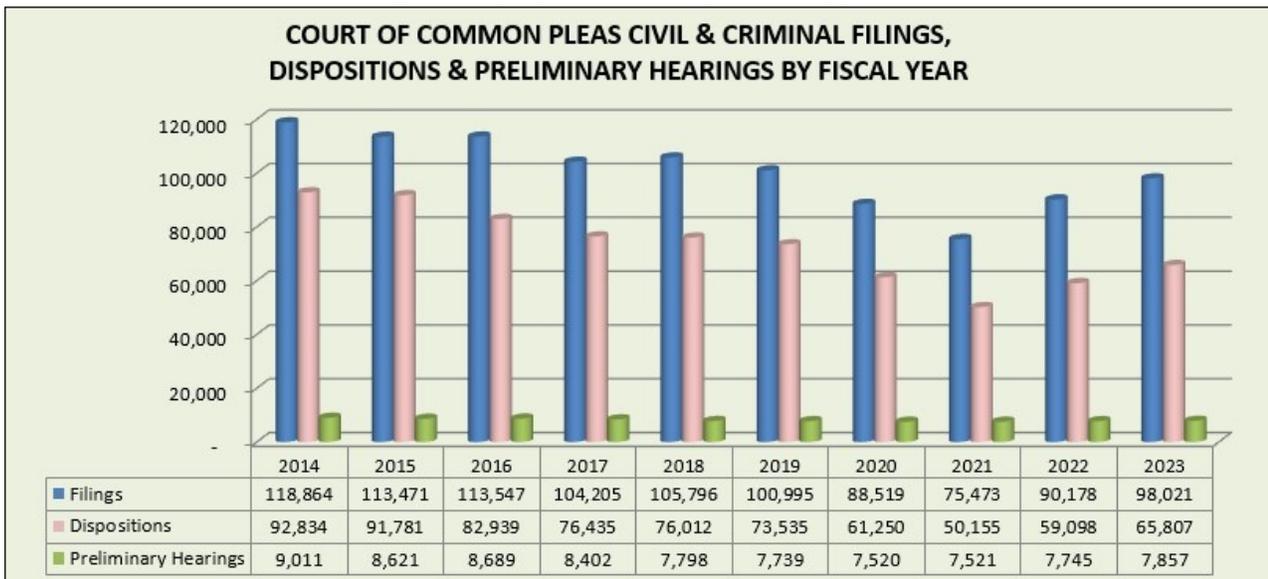
The Program is authorized under 21 Del. C. § 4177 (d) (2) with its goal being to enhance community safety through the promotion of lifestyle changes through specialized treatment providers and community supervision under the direction of the Department of Corrections. The Program encourages its participants by reminding them that life does not get better by chance, it gets better by CHANGE.

◆ Wilmington Community Court

The Wilmington Community Court seeks to reduce crime and recidivism by addressing the quality-of-life issues in the community utilizing a restorative justice approach. Since opening in the Fall of 2019, Community Court has served 554 participants, offering those charged with certain misdemeanors the chance to complete mandated alternatives to the traditional jail time or fines. A Community Resource Center is located on the second floor of the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center in Wilmington. It is open to any member of the public and serves as a mechanism to connect individuals with a variety of social service providers. One goal of the Community Court is to have offenders invest in the communities they have harmed. To better understand the needs of those communities, and to facilitate community service, in FY 23 the Community Court partnered with a downtown community center.

Conclusion

The Court of Common Pleas continues to operate as a busy, high-volume court despite limited resources. Thanks to its dedicated staff, the Court of Common Pleas perseveres in its mission “to provide a neutral forum for the people and institutions of Delaware in the resolution of everyday problems, disputes, and more complex legal matters in a fair, professional, efficient and practical manner.” ◆



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COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS JUDGES



Back Row (left to right): Judge Rae M. Mims, Judge Robert H. Surlles, Judge Anne E. Hartnett, Chief Judge Carl C. Danberg, Judge Kenneth S. Clark, Jr., Judge Bradley V. Manning.

Front Row (left to right): , Judge Monica A. Horton. Judge Kathleen K. Amalfitano, Judge Katharine L. Mayer.

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS COMMISSIONERS



Left to right: Commissioner Gregory R. Babowal, Commissioner Donald R. Bucklin, Commissioner Emily Ferrell