Appendix 2

Definitions and Explanatory Notes

Note: Caseload figures contained in this publication are based on information provided to the Office of State Courts Administrator by the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals and Circuit Courts. Population data was obtained from the United States Census Bureau website.

Associate Civil Case: Previously reported as Chapter 517. Civil cases heard under procedures outlined in Chapter 517, RSMo, 1986. Included are cases in which the amount in dispute does not exceed $25,000; hardship driving; replevin; forcible entry and unlawful detainer; and landlord-tenant actions. Trials de novo, counted in the General Civil category, are permitted on cases where the amount in question is $5,000 or less.

Civil Case: The unit of count is the petition. A single case may include multiple parties. Included in total civil cases are circuit civil, domestic relations, associate civil and small claims cases.

Criminal Case: The unit of count is the complaint, information or indictment. A single case may include multiple charges.

Included in total criminal cases are felonies, felony preliminaries and misdemeanors. Traffic offenses are also a type of criminal case. Municipal and county ordinance cases, which are quasi-criminal matters, are included in some tables.

Dispositions: Cases which have been concluded at that court level. The court has acted on the case and has assigned a 'manner of disposition' or 'final disposition docket code' to the case and no further action is required. The case may be reopened at a later date or at a different court level as a supplemental filing. Disposition counts reported in this supplement include all cases that were disposed between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016.

Disposition to Filing Ratio: Compares the number of cases disposed with the number of cases filed during the year to give an indication of how well the court is keeping up with its workload. This ratio is calculated by dividing the number of cases disposed by the number of cases filed. A ratio of 1.00 indicates that the court filed and disposed the same number of cases. Ratios greater than 1.00 means the court disposed more cases than were filed during the year, thus achieving a reduction in its pending caseload. Ratios less than 1.00 indicate that the court disposed fewer cases than were filed and experienced an increase in its pending caseload.

Domestic Relations: Includes dissolution of marriage; legal separation, annulment, separate maintenance; URESA; adult abuse; motions to modify; motions for contempt in domestic relations cases; change of name; contested actions involving administrative support orders of the Department of Social Services; child protection orders; paternity; writs of habeas corpus in child custody cases; registrations of foreign domestic relations judgments; and miscellaneous domestic relations cases.

Felony: Information or indictment alleging commission of a felony offense. Includes felony cases which were reduced to misdemeanors.

Associate Felony: Felony complaint. Previously reported as felony preliminary. If probable cause is found, the defendant is bound over for arraignment and trial. Includes felony complaints which were reduced to misdemeanors and disposed in the associate divisions.

Filings: Cases which have been initiated in the court system. Historically, 'to file' a paper meant to give it to the court clerk to include in the case record. Filings for fiscal 2016 are cases that were initiated between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016. These include supplemental filings.

Fine Collection Center (FCC): The Fine Collection Center processes certain traffic, watercraft and conservation violations for courts in participating counties statewide. Missouri created the processing center to reduce the administrative burden on local court clerks and free up some of their time for other court duties. The FCC also offers uniform fines, producing a fairer system for people across the state. As courts volunteer to use this resource, they achieve additional benefits including better accountability and improved collection rates.

Circuit Civil: Previously reported as general civil. Among the specific actions included are civil cases involving amounts over $25,000; Chapter 517, RSMo, and small claims trials de novo; administrative review cases; condemnations; extraordinary remedy cases, such as habeas corpus and injunctions; registrations of foreign judgment; tax actions; and motions for post conviction relief (Supreme Court Rules 24.035 and 29.15).

Judicial Information System (JIS): JIS is an automated case management software designed by Affiliated Computer Services (ACS). This software was selected as the sole Missouri standard software and all state courts are now moving toward implementation as budget resources allow. As of June 30, 2008, all of the state circuit courts used the system.

Juvenile: During FY 2003, the definitions for filed, disposed, and pending were changed for juvenile cases. In addition to revising definitions, procedures on case processing for some courts using JIS were changed during FY 2003 to eliminate subcases or supplemental filings. As of May 2005, all JIS courts had upgraded JIS software and new procedures. For those counties using JIS, juvenile cases filed consisted of original filings plus MMOD (motions to modify) during the fiscal year. Dispositions did not include the dispositions of these supplemental filings. Counties not using JIS continued to report filings and supplemental filings directly to OSCA. Because of these changes, juvenile filing, disposition, and pending data for original petitions and supplemental filings had not been counted consistently across all courts in the state.

As of the end of FY 2007, all counties were using JIS for juvenile cases; therefore all juvenile data for FY 2016 were reported from JIS.

Juveniles are individuals under 17 years of age. The unit of count is the petition. More than one child, as well as multiple allegations may be included in one petition. However, for case management purposes, courts are encouraged to open separate files for each child for Abuse/Neglect, Termination of Parental Rights, Juvenile Delinquency and Status Offenses. Multiple children who are being adopted by a party should be counted as one case. Referrals to the juvenile officer or the juvenile court in which no petition is filed are not included. Additional petitions or motions to modify filed under an existing case number after a disposition has been rendered on the original petitions are supplemental filings. Cases are considered closed when the child is no longer under jurisdiction of the court. Cases are considered pending if the child is still under jurisdiction of the court. Because dispositions are no longer reported on supplemental filings, the disposed to filing ratio will not accurately reflect the actual case processing of the court.

Mental Health Petition: Petition for 21 days, 30 days, 90 days, 180 days or one-year involuntary detention, treatment or rehabilitation for a mental disorder or abuse of alcohol and/or drugs.

Misdemeanor: Complaint or information alleging commission of a misdemeanor offense. Includes cases originally filed in either the circuit or associate division of the Circuit Court. A request for jury trial may or may not result in the case being certified from the associate to the circuit division, depending on local practice. Non-traffic infractions and conservation/watercraft offenses are included in the misdemeanor count.

Ordinance: Municipal divisions in Missouri can operate within one of three basic structures pursuant to section 479.060 RSMo:

1. Municipal funded court facility with municipal judge(s) (either lawyer or non-lawyer) and municipal clerk(s).
2. Municipal funded clerk(s) with cases processed and managed by the clerk(s) but heard by a state funded associate judge.
3. Municipal cases filed and heard through the associate division, where the judge and the clerk(s) are funded by the state.

Municipal divisions which operate under the first and second types of structures report data to OSCA using the Municipal Division Summary Reporting Form or using JIS. These data can be found in the Municipal Division section of this annual report supplement.

Municipal divisions which operate under the third type of structure report data through the Justice Information System (JIS) or Statewide Judicial Information System (SWJIS). These data are reported as Ordinance cases in the Circuit Court sections of this report.

Pending: Pending case counts include all cases that have been filed but not yet disposed in a particular court. Criminal cases that have been disposed but still require sentencing are not included as pending cases. Pending end figures reported for one year may not equal the pending beginning figures for the next year due to pending audits conducted at the court. The pending case counts reported in this supplement refer to the number of cases pending as of June 30, 2016.

Probate: Total cases include decedents' estates; minors' guardianships and conservatorships; incapacitated/disabled persons' guardianships and conservatorships; mental health petitions; and sexual predator cases.

Small Claims: The jurisdictional limit is $3,000. Gun permit and appeal cases are now included as small claim cases. Small claims trials de novo are General Civil cases. Petitioners may not file more than twelve cases in one year. Clerks of the court are required to assist petitioners in filing their cases.

Traffic: Violations of state traffic laws. Does not include the more serious traffic violations, such as driving while intoxicated, leaving the scene of an accident or driving while license is suspended or revoked. These cases are reflected in the numbers of misdemeanors, felonies, and felony preliminary cases.