



17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT
WINNEBAGO COUNTY *and* BOONE COUNTY
State of Illinois

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

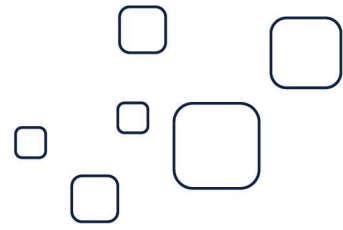


2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Trial Court Administration Office
Winnebago County Courthouse
400 West State Street, Room 215
Rockford, Illinois 61101

www.17thcircuit.illinoiscourts.gov

Message from the Chief Circuit Judge



The 17th Circuit Court, located in northern Illinois, proudly serves the citizens of Boone and Winnebago County.

As Chief Circuit Judge, I am proud to reflect on the exceptional dedication and hard work demonstrated by our judiciary and court staff this year. Their unwavering commitment to justice has been vital in maintaining the high standards of our circuit court.

Significant strides have been made in implementing new technologies and procedures to enhance court operations. These advancements are crucial for improving case management and ensuring timely justice for all who come before us, for example, through hard work and collaboration with justice system stakeholders, we successfully implemented the PreTrial Fairness Act.

Looking ahead, I am confident that our circuit court will continue to excel in upholding the law and fostering a fair judicial process. Together, we remain dedicated to providing exemplary service to the people of Illinois.



Chief Circuit Judge



HON. JOHN S. LOWRY
Chief Circuit Judge

In Illinois, a chief judge is a circuit judge elected by a majority of their fellow circuit judges to serve as the chief judicial officer of their circuit. The chief judge has general administrative authority within their circuit, and is subject to the Supreme Court's overall administrative authority.

2024 Year in *Review*



Achievements

Among a multitude of individual and collective achievements, highlighted accomplishments for 2024 include the following:

- Launched PFA data dashboard for Winnebago County.
- Designated a DV Mentor Court, and will assist courts in Stephenson County, Oregon, Wisconsin, New York and Missouri.
- Sustained the Wellness Track for misdemeanor behavioral health interventions.
- Winnebago County conducted our 17th Veterans Court Graduation Ceremony, 53rd Drug Court Graduation Ceremony and 35th TIP Court Graduation. Boone County conducted our 18th Drug Court Graduation.
- Awarded over \$1.2M in grants to serve our most at-risk defendants through our Problem-Solving Courts.
- Awarded over \$2.1M in grants to fund initiatives advanced by the Domestic Violence Coordinated Courts, including the development of an electronic service protection order pilot.
- Secured over \$645k in technology reimbursements and over \$283k in language access reimbursements.
- Conducted the 20th National Adoption Day celebration and over the years, 450 children adopted on National Adoption Day.
- Launch of the Human Trafficking Court Response Team. The HTCRT raises awareness of human trafficking through education and training and to increase the Circuit's trauma-informed response.
- Welcomed Hammy, the Rockford Icehogs mascot, as a court visitor.

2024:
Preserving our dedication to statewide excellence with an unwavering focus on service advancements.



Looking Forward

In 2025, the Circuit looks forward to increased data collection and reporting. We look forward to completing the Fairness Pilot Project with four courtrooms in the 17th. The project will collect litigant feedback and provide support to judges and court staff to improve their interactions with litigants. The project's bold goal is to improve fairness in the courts through procedural justice.

A number of exciting facility improvements are in the works including the Winnebago County Family Courts Center, renovations at the Boone County Courthouse, upgrades in the Winnebago County Law Library and general office furnishing and courtroom updates.

JUDGES OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT

CIRCUIT JUDGES

- Hon. John S. Lowry
Chief Judge & Supervising Judge of the Winnebago County Juvenile Courts Division
- Hon. Joseph P. Bruscato
Presiding Judge of the Family Division & Domestic Violence Coordinated Courts
- Hon. Lisa R. Fabiano
Presiding Judge of the Civil Division
- Hon. Gwyn Gulley
Supervising Judge of Arbitration
- Hon. Janet R. Holmgren
Presiding Judge of Juvenile Courts Division & the Problem-Solving Courts Division
- Hon. Brendan A. Maher
Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division
- Hon. Nicholas O. Meyer
- Hon. Scott Robinson
- Hon. C. Robert Tobin
Presiding Judge of Boone County
- Hon. Kathryn E. Zenoff
Assigned to the 4th District Appellate Court

ASSOCIATE JUDGES

- Hon. John T. Gibbons
Administrative Associate Judge
- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Hon. Ronald A. Barch
Supervising Judge of
Foreclosure Mediation | Hon. Francis M. Martinez | Hon. Debra Schafer |
| | Hon. Philip J. Nicolosi | Hon. Donald P. Shriver |
| Hon. Erin B. Buhl | Hon. Steven L. Nordquist | Hon. Ryan Swift |
| Hon. Jennifer Clifford | Hon. Scott Paccagnini | Hon. Tamika Walker |
| Hon. Donna R. Honzel | Hon. Amy Peterman | |
| | Hon. Todd A. Ramlow | |

Administrative Staff

Thomas R. Jakeway

Trial Court Administrator

Michael Smith
Deputy Court Administrator

Kimberly Ackmann
Deputy Court Administrator

Emily Behnke
Deputy Court Administrator

Nikki Ticknor
Deputy Court Administrator

Kelly Rohrer
Circuit Court Operations
Manager

Kristine Gibbons
Boone County Court
Operations Assistant

Kathleen L. Fink
Administrative Assistant
to the Chief Judge

Beverly Goodson
Judicial Assistant

Kelsey Schorsch
Judicial Assistant

Toni Hagerman
Judicial Assistant

Kimmy Furlanetto
Judicial Assistant

Madalyn Bull
Data Analyst / IT Liaison

Angelica King
Administrative Secretary

Kelly Jurmu
Chief Bailiff

Kelly Johnson
Court Reporting Services
Supervisor

Christine Hawley
Arbitration Administrator

Catherine Kosek
Administrative Assistant
ADR Center

Kyle Thompson-Taylor
Residential Foreclosure
Mediation Program Coordinator

Monica Minnis
Winnebago County
Language Access Facilitator

Margaret Mujica- Ruiz
Boone County
Language Access Facilitator

Jorge Paez
Court Interpreter

Melissa Rader
Problem-Solving Courts
Supervisor

Catherine Dredge
PSC Coordinator

Katie Smith
PSC Coordinator

Emily Armendariz
Wellness Court Liaison

Taylor Sagona
Case Docket Coordinator, DVCC

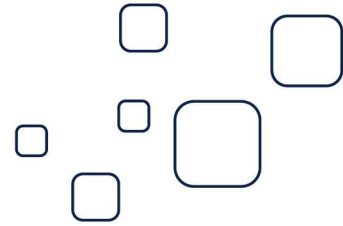
Haley Borchman
DVAC & Mentor Court Coordinator

Ireland Greipp
FVCC Coordinator

Shannon Seanor
Improving Criminal Justice
Response to Domestic Violence
Grant Manager

John Goss
Law Library Director

About the Seventeenth Circuit



The Illinois Constitution of 1970 (Article 4) provides for a unified, three tiered judiciary consisting of Circuit Courts, Appellate Courts, and a Supreme Court. The highest court in the State is the Illinois Supreme Court. The Illinois Appellate Court is the second tier of the judiciary. The Appellate Court is divided into five Judicial Districts. The Seventeenth Judicial Circuit is part of the Fourth Appellate District of the Appellate Court. Currently, one circuit judge from Winnebago County, the Honorable Kathryn E. Zenoff, serves on the Illinois Appellate Court by assignment.

The first tier of the judiciary is the Circuit Court, which is the trial court level. The State of Illinois is divided into twenty-five Judicial Circuits, including our Seventeenth Judicial Circuit which is comprised of both Winnebago County and Boone County.



Source: www.illinoiscourts.gov

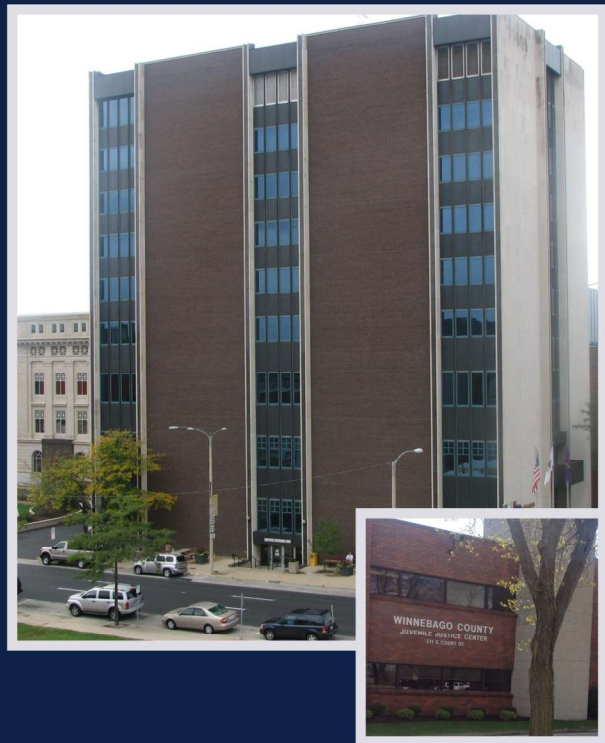
In the Circuit Court there are two types of Judges: Circuit Judges and Associate Judges. The Seventeenth Judicial Circuit has eleven Circuit Judges and seventeen Associate Judges. Circuit Judges are elected by popular vote for an initial six-year term. Thereafter, every six-years Circuit Judges must run for retention. The Circuit Judges elect a Chief Judge to provide administrative guidance to the entire circuit. The Circuit Judges also appoint and vote to retain Associate Judges based on four year terms. Associate Judges may hear all types of cases, deemed suitable by the Chief Judge or designated circuit judge.



17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT

WINNEBAGO COUNTY *and* BOONE COUNTY

State of Illinois



Court Locations

Winnebago County Courthouse

400 West State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61101

Winnebago County Criminal Justice Center

650 West State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61101

Winnebago County Juvenile Justice Center

211 South Court Street
Rockford, Illinois 61101

Boone County Courthouse

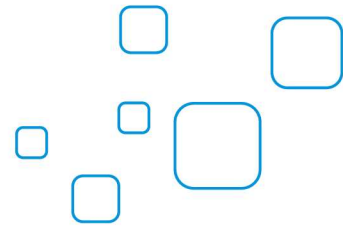
601 North Main Street
Belvidere, Illinois 61008

Alternative Dispute Resolution Center

308 West State Street, Suite 25
Rockford, Illinois 61101

OPERATIONS

Judicial Assignments



Administration

Hon. John S. Lowry Winnebago Co.- 209
Hon. John T. Gibbons Winnebago Co.- A

Appellate Court – Fourth District

Hon. Kathryn E. Zenoff c/o Fourth District Appellate Courthouse
201 West Monroe Street
Springfield, Illinois 62704

Civil Division

Hon. Lisa Fabiano Winnebago Co.- 412
Hon. Gwyn Gulley Winnebago Co.- 314
Hon. Scott Robinson Winnebago Co.- 209
Hon. Ronald A. Barch Winnebago Co.- 426
Hon. Steven L. Nordquist Winnebago Co.- 216
Hon. Donald P. Shriver Boone Co.- 3

Family Division

Hon. Joseph P. Bruscato Winnebago Co.- 467
Hon. Nicholas O. Meyer Winnebago Co.
Hon. Stephen Balogh Winnebago Co.- 451
Hon. Steven L. Nordquist Winnebago Co.- 216
Hon. Amy Peterman Winnebago Co.- 459
Hon. Todd A. Ramlow Winnebago Co.- 455
Hon. Donald P. Shriver Boone Co.- 3

Boone Division

Hon. C. Robert Tobin Boone Co.- 1
Hon. Janet R. Holmgren Boone Co.- 4
Hon. Donald P. Shriver Boone Co.- 3
Hon. Ryan A. Swift Boone Co.- 2

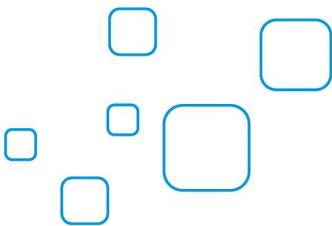
Criminal Division

Hon. Brendan A. Maher Winnebago Co.- D
Hon. Janet Holmgren Winnebago Co.- 217
Hon. John S. Lowry Winnebago Co.- 209
Hon. Scott Robinson Winnebago Co.- 125
Hon. C. Robert Tobin Boone Co.- 1
Hon. Ronald J. White Winnebago Co.- 316
Hon. Heidi Agustsson Winnebago Co.- B
Hon. Jennifer Clifford Winnebago Co.- C
Hon. John T. Gibbons Winnebago Co.- A
Hon. Phillip J. Nicolosi Winnebago Co.- 311
Hon. Scott A. Paccagnini Winnebago Co.- 478
Hon. Debra D. Schafer Winnebago Co.- 317
Hon. Ryan A. Swift Boone Co.- 2
Hon. Tamika Walker Winnebago Co.- 315

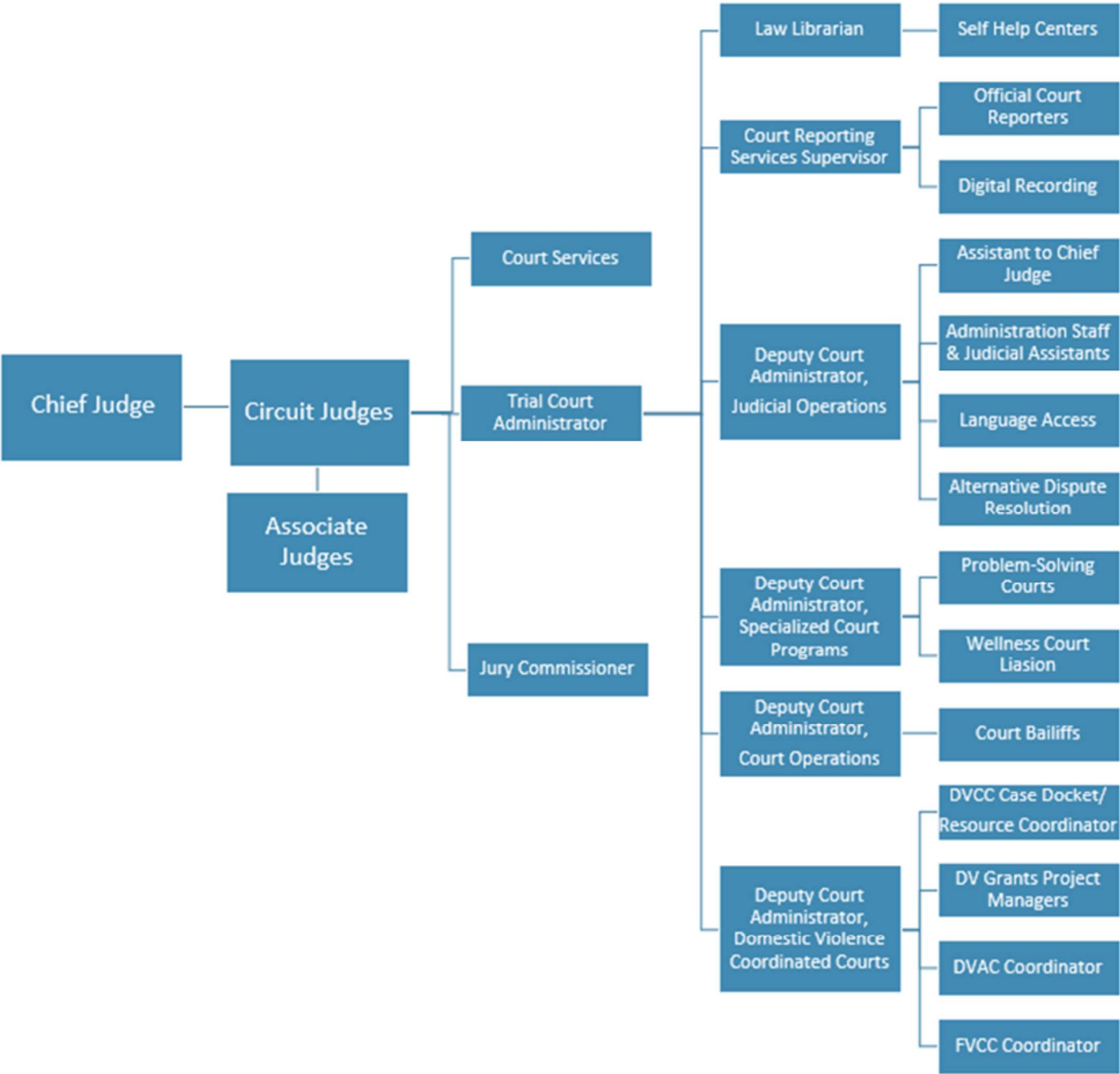
Juvenile & Problem Solving Courts Division

Hon. Janet R. Holmgren Winnebago Co.- 217
Hon. Erin Buhl Winnebago Co.- 2
Hon. John Gibbons Winnebago Co.- 217
Hon. Donna Honzel Winnebago Co.- 1
Hon. Francis M. Martinez Winnebago Co.- 3
Hon. C. Robert Tobin Boone Co.- 1

OPERATIONS



Organizational Chart



OPERATIONS



TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATION

Thomas R. Jakeway, Trial Court Administrator

The Trial Court Administration Office supports the judges of the Seventeenth Circuit Court. The Court Administration staff works under the supervision and direction of the Chief Judge. The office manages court operations and provides guidance for day-to-day operations and long-term decisions. The office is responsible for collaboration and coordination with judges, court personnel, legal professionals, and other justice system stakeholders to address systemic issues, improve court processes, and implement policies and procedures to ensure the smooth functioning of the court system. Responsibilities include:

- overseeing bailiff, court reporting and judicial assistant teams,
- budgeting/fiscal matters,
- case management processes,
- public relations and community outreach, and
- project leadership.

Court Administration is dedicated to ensuring equal and timely access to the court and related services, conducting performance measurement for purposes of continuous improvement, and maintaining a safe and secure work environment. Court Administration is also actively involved in grant administration, judicial internship programs, and web-site management.

COURT REPORTING SERVICES

Kelly Johnson, Supervisor

Right: Court Reporting Supervisor, Tammy Gulley, addresses area students.

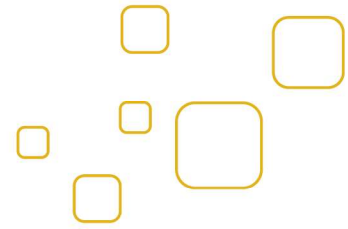


Court Reporting Services employees are responsible for making a full reporting of the courtroom proceedings presented in the trial court. It is the duty of these court reporting employees to record verbatim all that is said during every court proceeding to which they are assigned.

Presently there are a total of eighteen court reporting employees assigned to the 17th Judicial Circuit Court. Winnebago County maintains a staff of nine Official Court Reporters and six Court Specialists. Boone County maintains a staff of two Official Court Reporters. All staff are assigned to courtrooms on a rotating schedule to evenly distribute workloads and transcript volume. All Official Court Reporters are Certified Shorthand Reporters licensed by the Illinois Department of Financial & Professional Regulation.

The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) has installed digital recording equipment in all of the courtrooms in both Winnebago and Boone Counties. All civil courtrooms and select felony courtrooms are currently using digital recording as the official record. All of the Court Reporting Services employees are to be trained and certified by the AOIC to operate this equipment.

OPERATIONS



LAW LIBRARY & SELF-HELP LEGAL CENTERS

John Goss, Law Library Director

The Winnebago County Law Library is located on the third floor of the Winnebago County Courthouse. The Boone County Law Library is located on the second floor of the Boone County Courthouse. Both law libraries are available to serve the public during regular courthouse hours. Winnebago County has a full time Law Library Director who maintains the library collection, answers questions and assists the Judges in legal research projects. Free public access Westlaw® terminals are available in both facilities for computer assisted legal research.

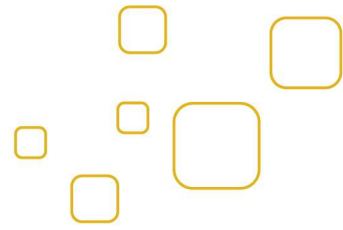
Self-Help Legal Centers are located within each of the law libraries. These facilities make information available on Illinois law and court procedures for individuals who are unable to retain the services of an attorney for representation in court. Self-Help Center Navigators are present during normal working hours to assist individuals with computer and print resources. The Winnebago County Self-Help Legal Center was opened in May 2007. In calendar year 2024, the Winnebago County Self-Help Legal Center provided assistance to over 7,860 individuals.

The Boone County Self-Help Center was opened in May 2008. In 2024, the Boone County Self-Help Center provided legal information and forms to over 156 individuals.

Both Legal Self-Help Centers are computer based allowing some materials to be accessed via the Seventeenth Circuit Court Webpage at www.17thcircuit.illinoiscourts.gov.



OPERATIONS



COURT BAILIFFS

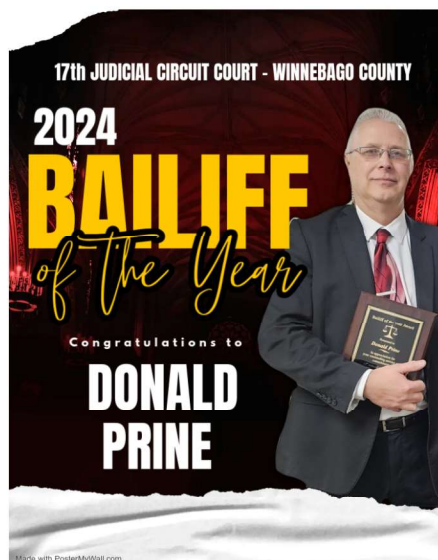
Kelly Jurmu, Chief Bailiff

The Bailiffs of the 17th Judicial Circuit serve a vital function for our courts. Bailiffs maintain order within the courtrooms and aid their assigned judges as needed during court proceedings, both in-person and in virtual hearings. Bailiffs monitor daily court schedules and aid in coordinating the appearance of attorneys, litigants, interpreters, inmates and the public. As primary points of contact within the court system, bailiffs help to promote access to justice by answering questions and helping individuals while within the courthouse.

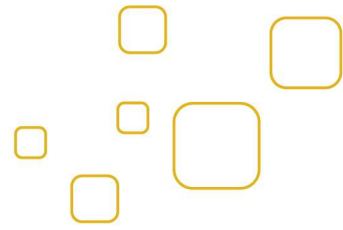
Currently, there are twenty-two full time Bailiffs, and one Chief Bailiff in Winnebago County. The Chief Bailiff is responsible for work assignments, scheduling, and training. In addition, the Chief Bailiff acts as a liaison with other stakeholders in the court system such as the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office and the City of Rockford Police Department.

In Boone County, the bailiffs are part of the Boone County Sheriff's staff and are under the supervision of the Sheriff.

Right: **Donald Prine**
named 2024 Bailiff of the
Year



OPERATIONS

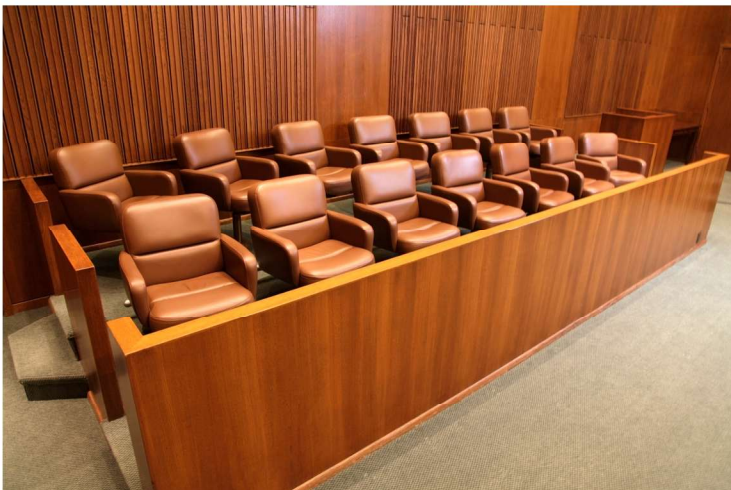


WINNEBAGO COUNTY JURY COMMISSION

Sarah Flores, Clerk of the Jury Commission

Trial by jury is a fundamental part of the American system of justice, and is a right guaranteed under the constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Illinois. To preserve this right it is essential that the court establish and maintain a well-functioning system for the selection and utilization of jurors. Under Illinois law, every county with a population in excess of 40,000 must establish a Jury Commission consisting of three Jury Commissioners appointed by the circuit judges of the court. Each Jury Commissioner serves for a three year term. The day-to-day operation of the jury system in the Winnebago County Courthouse is administered through the Office of the Jury Commission under the direction of the Clerk of the Jury Commission, Sarah Flores.

This office is responsible for the selection and summoning of prospective jurors and the management of jurors during their term of service. Illinois law requires that the names of prospective jurors be randomly drawn from a combined list of registered voters; Illinois driver's license holders 18 years of age and older; Illinois Disabled Person Identification Card holders; Illinois Identification Card holders and claimants for unemployment insurance. During 2024, 24,400 citizens were summoned for jury service in Winnebago County. Of this number, 4,671 appeared as instructed and 2,833 were directed to courtrooms for jury selection. There were a total of 58 jury trials.



In 2024, there were
58 jury trials
in Winnebago
County.

OPERATIONS



PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE

Nick Zimmerman, Winnebago County Public Defender
Kathryn J. Cross, Boone County Public Defender



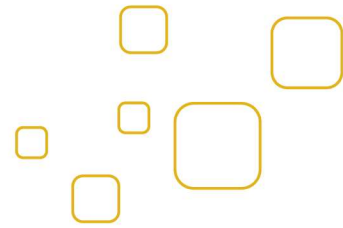
The Public Defender's Office provides legal representation to individuals found to be indigent by the Court.

In Winnebago County, thirty-seven attorneys and twelve support staff handle adult felony, misdemeanor, and traffic cases; juvenile delinquency cases, and represent parents in abuse and neglect cases. The Winnebago County Public Defender's Office also staffs the problem-solving courts including the Therapeutic Intervention Program, Adult Drug Court, Family Recovery Court, Veterans Court, and Youth Recovery Court.

The Boone County office consists of five attorneys, two full-time support staff and a part-time support staff person. The Boone County Public Defender's Office handles adult felony, misdemeanor, and traffic cases; represents minors in juvenile delinquency cases, and parties in abuse and neglect cases; handles extradition and post-conviction matters as appointed by the Court; and staffs the Adult Drug Court and Youth Recovery Court. The Public Defender also represents persons who appear in custody for the initial appearance call each day.

The Public Defender provides a highly competent level of legal representation through the efforts of a staff possessing the greatest concentration of criminal defense experience in the area and a firm belief in the principle that every person is entitled to a fair hearing regardless of their ability to pay.

OPERATIONS



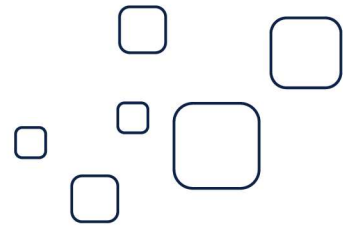
ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER

Christine Hawley, Arbitration Administrator

Mandatory Arbitration was instituted as a pilot program in Winnebago County in the fall of 1987 making it the oldest court-annexed arbitration program in the state. The Boone County program began in February 1995. All civil actions that are filed seeking money damages in excess of \$10,000.00, but not greater than \$50,000.00, are automatically assigned to non-binding mandatory arbitration. Additionally, all small claims cases with a timely filed jury demand are transferred into the arbitration program. Pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Rules, these arbitration cases involve less formal discovery procedures and a hearing before a panel of three trained attorney arbitrators. If any party is not satisfied with the award made by the arbitrators after the hearing they have a right to reject the award and proceed to trial before a judge.

The day-to-day management of the program is the responsibility of the Arbitration Administrator with the assistance of one part-time secretary. The Arbitration Administrator is responsible for tracking the progress and maintaining statistics on all arbitration cases filed in Winnebago and Boone Counties, as well as maintaining a list of approved attorney-arbitrators, and for securing the service of these arbitrators for hearings. In addition to the arbitration program, the Administrator also tracks all major law division cases that have been court-referred to mediation and makes parties aware that the ADR Center is available for holding their mediations. The Alternative Dispute Center is located in Stewart Square in Rockford, approximately one-half block east of the Winnebago County Courthouse.

Problem-Solving Courts



The Problem-Solving Courts are treatment courts that provide intensive court supervision with individualized treatment services to address substance use disorders and mental illness through wrap-around services.

Drug Court

The Winnebago County Drug Court was established in 1996 to help rebuild the lives of individuals who are charged with felony offenses and suffer from underlying substance use disorder. Drug Court represents the combined efforts of justice and treatment professionals in actively intervening and breaking the cycle of substance abuse, crime, delinquency, and child maltreatment. The overall benefit to individuals recovering from substance abuse problems are immeasurable, including but not limited to improving relationships with their families, increased self-esteem, better health and heightened likelihood for employment and educational success.

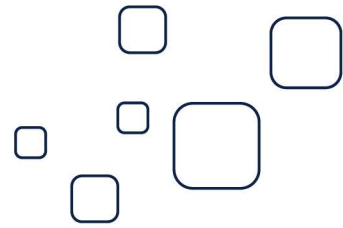
The Boone County Drug Court was established in 2013.

Veterans Court

The Veterans Court in Winnebago County was established in January 2012 to respond to the unique needs of justice involved veterans who are eligible for VA benefits. This specialty court is unique in that veterans are able to participate in the court with pending and post plea charges. Case management is provided by a Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist who works through the Department of Veterans Affairs in Madison, WI. Veterans are linked with a variety of services available through Veterans Affairs in Rockford and in Madison, WI.



Problem-Solving Courts



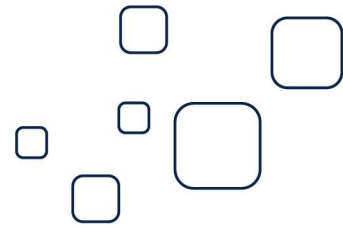
Family Recovery Court (FRC)

The 17th Circuit Court established a Family Recovery Court in the Winnebago County Juvenile Abuse and Neglect Court in December 2009. FRC is a specialized program designed to assist families where at least one parent's substance abuse was the cause of involvement in the child welfare system. Wrap around services are given to the entire family which include substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, housing assistance, trauma therapy and the participants are subject to judicial monitoring and accountability. The goal is to assist the parent(s) to recovery in order that their children can safely remain in their care and end their involvement in the child welfare system and juvenile court.

Youth Recovery Court (YRC)

The YRC spans both Winnebago and Boone County and is the first juvenile mental health court in Illinois. The Youth Recovery Court was created to serve youth involved with juvenile delinquency court in Winnebago County with non-violent offenses, ages 10 – 17, who have a mental illness or co-occurring disorder. The program provides intensive case management, priority and specialized services and court oversight. Winnebago County Juvenile Probation, Boone County Juvenile Probation and Rosecrance clinicians provide intensive, home-based therapeutic interventions, while under judicial monitoring.

Problem-Solving Courts



The Problem-Solving Courts are treatment courts that provide intensive court supervision with individualized treatment services to address substance use disorders and serious mental illness.

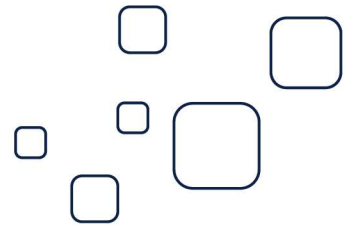
Wellness Track

The Wellness Track is a specialized court program in Winnebago County designed for adults who have been arrested for nonviolent misdemeanor offenses and have underlying mental health issues, substance use disorders, or housing insecurity that may have contributed to their behavior leading to their arrest. The goal is to decrease reoccurring arrests and increase access to community resources like temporary housing, and mental health and substance abuse services.

Therapeutic Intervention Program (TIP)

The Winnebago County Therapeutic Intervention Program (TIP) was instituted in 2005 and is designed for adults with a serious mental illness who have been arrested for misdemeanor or felony offenses. The goal is to decrease reoccurring arrest, decrease days in jail, and increase access and participation in services, so as to enhance public safety by reducing the likelihood that a person will reoffend. TIP is strictly a voluntary program where participants receive wrap around services which include intensive case management services, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, housing assistance, trauma therapy, and cognitive behavioral therapy while under rigorous judicial monitoring and accountability.

Domestic Violence Coordinated Court



Established in 2012 with a grant award from the Department of Justice/Office on Violence Against Women, the 17th Judicial Circuit Winnebago County Domestic Violence Coordinated Court (DVCC) has continued to operate with an enhanced focus on victim safety and offender accountability. The DVCC is comprised of a dedicated domestic violence criminal court and a dedicated domestic violence civil court, which adjudicate all levels and types of intimate-partner related criminal and civil cases. Grant funds support victim advocacy within the court setting, offender accountability and compliance monitoring practices, and provide intensive training to judicial and court staff. To date, the DVCC has heard over 15,500 intimate partner domestic violence cases.

Justice for Families (JFF) Grant Program

The Department of Justice/Office on Violence Against Women's Justice for Families grant program supports the work of the Domestic Violence Coordinated Court through providing funds to support administrative staff, victim advocates, legal assistance, and training. Current Justice for Families grant goals and objectives include increasing access to justice for underserved populations, improving services within the Domestic Violence Assistance Center, and working with the Juvenile courts to enhance domestic violence responses.

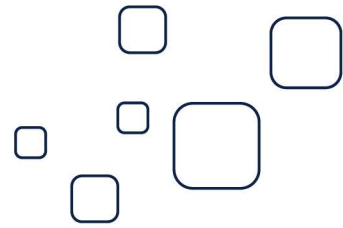
Right Hon. Joseph P. Bruscato participates in the DV Mentor Courts Enhancement Meeting at the Center for Justice Innovation in New York City.



Domestic Violence Mentor Court Initiative

The 17th Judicial Circuit Court Domestic Violence Coordinated Court has thrice served as a nationally recognized Domestic Violence Mentor Court since 2014. This recognition has allowed the 17th Judicial Circuit DVCC to host several site visits from jurisdictions across the country interested in creating or enhancing their own Domestic Violence Court. As a Mentor Court, the DVCC shared its specialized practices and procedures with courts and technical assistance providers nationwide, and continues to provide guidance to jurisdictions that reach out for assistance. In 2023, The DVCC was awarded continued federal funding to serve as a DV Mentor Court through 2025. This year, the DVCC was assigned mentee courts from Marion County in Oregon, Rockland County in New York, and Brown County in Wisconsin.

Domestic Violence Coordinated Court



Electronic Service Protection Order Court Pilot Grant

In 2024, Winnebago County was selected by the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women as a pilot site to explore implementing legal and practicable service for protective orders. This five year grant involves stakeholders from the Court, Sheriff's Department, Circuit Clerk's Office, Information Technology Department, State's Attorney's Office and Victim Service Providers joining forces to develop policies, systems, and secure permission for electronic service. Developed policies and lessons learned from this pilot will inform nationwide practices around electronic protective order service.

Multi-Disciplinary Teams and a Coordinated Community Response

The Domestic Violence Coordinated Court and its related initiatives participate in a wide range of Multi-Disciplinary Teams and Coordinated Community Responses focused on ending family and intimate partner violence. These teams include the Stalking and Strangulation Task Force, Firearms Task Force, Juvenile Court Stakeholders Team, Guardian ad litem Workgroup, and the Domestic Violence Coordinated Court Core Team. Regular meetings are held with additional collaborative partners including meetings with Partner Abuse Intervention Program providers and DV Service Providers.

Improving Criminal Justice Responses to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking (ICJR) Grant Program

The ICJR grant program supports the work of the Domestic Violence Coordinated Court through its focus on victim safety, offender accountability, coordinated community response, and specialized training. The ICJR grant program seeks to identify gaps and develop improved responses to violation of protective orders to improve victim safety and offender accountability, strengthen advocacy services, and coordinate training for prosecutors and other members of our community's coordinated community response to domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. In 2023, the Court received continued federal funding under this award program through 2026.

Department of Court Services

Debbie Jarvis, Director

The Department of Court Services supervises individuals involved in our criminal justice system. By incorporating core values of integrity, respect, accountability, fairness and professionalism, Court Services strives to promote community safety, reduce recidivism and improve the quality of life for offenders.

Court Services is comprised of an Adult Probation Division, Juvenile Probation Division, Juvenile Detention Division and Pretrial Division. Additionally, the department operates the Resource Intervention Center which enables community service agencies to provide much needed services to the adult and juvenile offenders under one roof.

Boone County Probation

Amy Gallano, Deputy Director

The mission of Boone County Probation is to provide the Court with a system of quality programs which are responsive to constitutional and statutory requirements and reflect judicial priorities and community needs. The focus is to restore the offender to productive citizenship without compromising the safety of the community. Probation Officers provide assistance and guidance to those individuals so that they may be reintegrated into society in a productive and meaningful manner, while holding them accountable for court ordered conditions.

The division consists of a Deputy Director, Senior Probation Officer, two Adult Probation Officers, one Pretrial Officer, one Program Coordinator/Drug Court Senior Probation Officer, one Adult Redeploy Probation Officer, one Juvenile Probation Officer, one Hybrid Officer who supervises both adult and juvenile clients and an Administrative Assistant. In 2013, Drug Court was implemented in Boone County for adult clients whose criminal behavior is directly linked to a substance abuse diagnosis. In 2023, Adult Redeploy was implemented in Boone County for adults who are assessed as high risk/high need individuals who would benefit by increased contacts, additional supports/services and access to treatment. The juvenile probation officers supervise a diversion program designed to keep less serious clients from entering the court system. A juvenile officer also participates in Youth Recovery Court; a specialized problem-solving court for juveniles whose delinquent behavior is linked directly to a mental health diagnosis. In 2023, Boone County partnered with Youth Services Network to implement a Juvenile Redeploy program for those juvenile clients that are assessed as high risk/high need that could benefit from additional services, to include individual counseling and case management. In 2019 the Department formalized a Pretrial Services Division.

In 2024, Boone County supervised an average of 292 adult probationers and 47 juvenile probationers. There were 312 Pretrial Release Reports completed and an average of 102 pretrial clients supervised.

Department of Court Services

Winnebago County Adult Probation

Lorraine Dixon, Deputy Director

The mission of Adult Probation is to serve the court, reduce recidivism, facilitate positive change and promote community safety in Winnebago County. Probation officers are able to accomplish this mission through skilled and targeted supervision in collaboration with the court and community service providers. Probation officers also monitor court-ordered conditions which could be remedial (public service, restitution); punitive (incarceration, fines and court costs); or rehabilitative (counseling, community assistance programs).

Winnebago County Adult Probation supervised an average of 2,075 offenders in 2024. Adult Probation employs a Deputy Director, four Supervisors, thirty-five Probation Officers, and four support staff. This division of Court Services consists of the following units:

- Intake Unit
- Inter/Intra-State Transfer Unit
- General Unit
- Presentence Investigation Unit
- Domestic Violence Unit
- Problem-Solving Courts Programs with specialized Probation Unit

Winnebago County Adult Probation Officers utilize Illinois Probation Casework Standards, which consists of an intake process and case management. After being sentenced to probation, clients complete the Adult Risk Assessment (ARA) with a probation officers. The ARA tool identifies the client's problem/need areas, risk levels, barriers, and strengths. Following the completion of the ARA, the supervising officer provides feedback to the client by applying Core Correctional Practices and by developing an individualized case plan. Throughout a client's term of probation, officers utilize supervision strategies, which include following the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts' contact standards, behavioral change management, and structured sessions to reduce recidivism. Officers also adhere to the Risk, Need, Responsivity Model and incorporate Evidence Based Practices when working with clients.

Department of Court Services

Winnebago County Pretrial Services

Jodi GeRue, Deputy Director

Pretrial Services was established in July of 1990 to help alleviate jail overcrowding. Our mission is to promote pretrial justice while enhancing community safety. In 2024, we continued to assist the Court in making decisions regarding conditions of pretrial release by providing the court with pretrial reports and assessment on individuals who were arrested and remained in custody prior to arraignment.

The pretrial report prepared by Pretrial Services provides the court with information about a defendant's background, criminal history, behavioral health, marital and family information allowing the Court to make timely and informed release decisions. Pretrial Services prepared a total of 3,424 reports in 2024.

Pretrial Services uses the Virginia Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument-Revised. This pretrial assessment identifies factors related to the individuals likelihood of failure to appear in court and new arrest during the pretrial stage. In addition, Pretrial Services completes the Domestic Violence Screening Instrument (DVSI) in domestic violence cases alleging intimate partner violence. Pretrial Services conducted 3,182 pretrial risk assessments and 1,272 domestic violence screenings in 2024.

Pretrial Services provides supervision and monitors conditions of release including reporting to Pretrial Services, curfew check, urinalysis, assessment, and treatment. In 2024, Pretrial Services supervised 2,471 defendants released with conditions.

The Pretrial Services Division employs a Deputy Director (who also oversees the Resource Intervention Center), one Supervisor, two Senior Pretrial Officers, nine Pretrial Officers, and one support staff.

Department of Court Services

Resource Intervention Center (RIC)

Jodi GeRue, Deputy Director

The Resource Intervention Center (RIC) opened for service in 2008 housing comprehensive services for individuals being supervised by the Winnebago County Adult Probation Division and the Winnebago County Pretrial Services Division.

The RIC employs a Deputy Director who also oversees the Pretrial Services Division, one Supervisor, four Probation Officers, one Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, and one support staff.

The mission of the RIC is to enhance community safety by providing evidence-based targeted interventions. Probation Officers complete validated risk/need assessments that identify areas of concern in a person's life and predicts the likelihood of recidivism. Interventions at the RIC target the identified areas of risk and needs.

Pretrial Officers complete pretrial assessments that identify factors related to the likelihood of failure to appear and new arrest during the pretrial stage. Supportive services at the RIC are also available to individuals being supervised by Pretrial Services.

Individuals on probation who are referred to the RIC are assessed for readiness to change using the URICA (University of Rhode Island Change Assessment) tool. Based on this score, many probationers who are identified as not being ready to change are recommended to an integrated cognitive behavioral change program to address treatment readiness.

RIC staff provide:

- Thinking for a Change (T4C), a cognitive behavioral change group
- T4C Aftercare
- Beyond Trauma: A Healing Journey for Women
- Exploring Trauma: A Brief Interaction for Men and Gender Diverse People
- Anger Management
- Beyond Violence, using a cognitive based approach
- A New Direction Relapse Prevention
- Grief and loss support groups
- Life skills groups
- Mental Health Assessment and Individual therapy

In 2024, the most utilized programs at the RIC included treatment for substance use disorders and cognitive behavioral programs.

RIC's collaborative service providers include:

- High school equivalency (GED) program, by **Rock Valley College Foundation - HEARR** (Higher Education Alliance for the Rock River Valley)
- Substance use assessment and substance use disorder treatment, by **Rosecrance & Remedies**
- Parenting classes, by **Youth Services Bureau**
- Partner abuse intervention programs, by **Remedies**
- Wake Up group, providing support and mentoring by **Tommy Meeks**
- Workforce Success Series which include sessions on Exploration and Employment Opportunities, Barriers to Education, Interview & Resumes, Teamwork & Leadership, and Workforce Success Skills, by **Highland Community College's TRIO Program**
- Financial Literacy, **Highland Community College's TRIO Program**

Department of Court Services

Winnebago County Juvenile Probation

Taryn Marko, Deputy Director

Winnebago County Juvenile Probation provides services and supervision for youth arrested for delinquent behavior. Our mission is to provide for a safer community, to help reduce juvenile delinquency, and to promote quality services to all youth, victims, and families. Winnebago County Juvenile Probation employs a Deputy Director, four Supervisors, sixteen full-time Probation Officers, and two support staff. Juvenile Probation consists of both an Intake Unit and a Field Unit.

- **The Intake Unit** utilizes early intervention strategies that include substantive probation adjustments and informal supervision to address issues and divert certain youth from the Juvenile Justice System while holding the youth accountable for their behavior. In 2024, there were approximately 163 probation adjustments as well as 17 minors who were placed on informal supervision.
- **The Field Unit** provides supervision and case management to minors assigned to probation. A probation term may involve treatment referrals and counseling, various internal and community-based programming, public service work, restitution, detention time, foster care, or residential placement with the goal of rehabilitating juvenile offenders. At the end of 2024, there were 262 active juvenile probation cases with an average caseload of 22 minors per Probation Officer. The Department has several specialized Probation Officers, including a School-Based Officer and two officers assigned to the Juvenile Redeploy Program.
 - **School-Based Officers** provide on-site prevention and intervention services to area high schools.
 - **Juvenile Redeploy Probation Officers** work with moderate to high-risk youth, both pre-adjudication and post adjudication, alongside a team from Youth Services Network to provide wrap-around services for the youth and their family. With Redeploy, juveniles receive support from a case manager, therapist, & family engagement specialist in addition to the Probation Officer. This program assists the youth to address their risk areas with the goal to surround the youth with community support.

The **Juvenile Intervention Center (JRIC)** is located inside the Juvenile Probation Department. It opened late fall of 2023 and is an on site therapeutic center for youth on probation or court supervision. Similar to the Resource Intervention Center for our adult population, the JRIC consists of a therapist who provides individual therapy and group curriculums ranging from topics such as grief and trauma to Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT). Programs offered through the JRIC target the identified areas of risk and needs that Probation Officers determine through risk assessments and comprehensive assessments from clinicians.

The **Juvenile Assessment Center** is overseen by Juvenile Probation. It is a central reception center for police agencies to bring youth who have been arrested for violating the law or taken into custody for non-criminal reasons, i.e. running away. Probation Officers at this location utilize a screening instrument that determines if the arrested minors should be detained or released back to their guardian, and also conduct assessments to recommend whether the minors should be referred to court or if the cases should be handled informally with no further court action. Illinois Crisis Intervention Services (ICIS) advocates work with the non-arrest cases that require specific family services. Probation Officers from the Juvenile Assessment Center connects youth and their families to community services in effort to decrease future arrests.

Department of Court Services

Winnebago County Juvenile Detention Center

Julie McCray-Grotto, Superintendent

The Winnebago County Juvenile Detention Center is a secure, 48 bed facility, with an operational capacity of 40, housing minors between the ages of 10 and 20 who are awaiting proceedings in Juvenile and, in some circumstances, Adult Court. The detention center was built in 1992 and was expanded to its current capacity in 1995. In the last couple years, the Winnebago County Board has provided the funding for multiple projects to ensure facility improvements are completed.

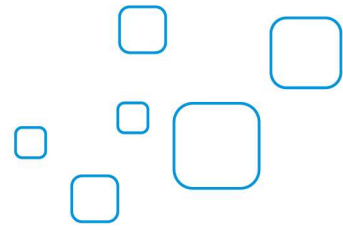
In calendar year 2024, the average daily population was 30.9. This was a decrease from 2023 when the facility had an average of 36.9. The below capacity average daily population is attributed to the efforts of the Court, State's Attorney and Public Defender working to handle cases more efficiently. The increase in daily population is correlated to the effects of juveniles' adjustment in post-pandemic times.

The Detention Center provides a variety of programming for the lodged minors. Rosecrance provides behavioral health services for the minors in detention through a contract with University of Illinois School of Medicine-Rockford. In 2023, behavioral health services were increased due to funding received through the Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board allowing for the addition of three full time qualified mental health workers through Freedom Behavioral Health. Juveniles in the facility now have behavioral health services available seven days a week. Those services include group therapy providing Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and trauma response, along with individual sessions and crisis response.

Education at the facility is provided by three District 205 special education certified teachers and a para professional. Teachers work with the youth on either their home school curriculum or on a curriculum through Subject.com.

Detention Center staff and outside community volunteers supplement education and therapeutic services by facilitating program related to career exploration, art, therapy dogs and teaching a variety of life skills.

Court Programs & Activities



Judicial Speakers Bureau

The 17th Circuit Judicial Speakers Bureau was established to help the community gain an understanding and knowledge of what can be a very complex legal system and the various programs in which the court is involved. The Judicial Speakers Bureau is comprised of judges who preside in both Boone County and Winnebago County. Judges are available to speak to any school, community group or civic organization in the 17th Circuit that would like to further their understanding of our court systems and the administration of justice. In 2024, judges not only visited various grade schools, but they also volunteered at Rockford Public School's Academy Expo and hosted students for the RPS 205's Job Shadow experience.

Guided tours of our court facilities are also available. These tours offer groups the opportunity to see firsthand the operations and inner workings of the several components which make up our Justice System. To arrange for a speaker or schedule a courthouse tour, contact the Court Administration Office.



Above: Hon. Amy Peterman visits a third grade class at Stone Creek School.

Below: Hon. Tamika Walker hosts students from RPS 205 for a job shadow experience.



National Adoption Day

National Adoption Day, occurring each November, is celebrated in the 17th Circuit with a gathering and celebration finalizing adoptions of children previously residing in foster care.

National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to raise awareness of the estimated 100,000 children in foster care that are ready for adoption and waiting for a family. On this day, court staff, attorneys and social service agency professionals from all across the United States work together to finalize adoptions and celebrate all of the families participating in adoptions. Over the last twenty years on National Adoption Day, a total of 450 children have been adopted into permanent loving families in the 17th Circuit.

Court Programs & Activities



Mediation Programs

Mediation programs are a form of alternative dispute resolution where a trained neutral third party, a mediator, facilitates communication between parties to explore options to work towards resolution. The 17th Circuit has a number of mediation programs.



Family

The 17th Circuit Court Family Mediation Program provides a way for parents to work out child custody and placement agreements with the assistance of a neutral third party. All mediators who participate in this program have extensive training and must be approved by the Presiding Judge of the Family Division



Small Claims

Since 2006, pro se litigants in small claims in Winnebago County cases have been able to actively resolve disputes through our free voluntary mediation program. At mediation, the parties meet with a neutral, certified mediator, who listens to both sides and helps the parties find their own solution. Mediators do not make any decisions for the parties, but will assist the parties in the preparation of orders to be filed with the court.



Court-Annexed Major Civil

Any contested civil matter asserting a claim in excess of \$50,000.00, or other contested civil matters such as chancery, miscellaneous remedy or probate cases may be referred to mediation by a judge or by stipulation of the parties involved.

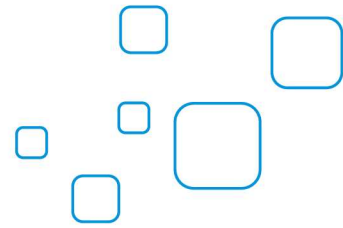
Residential Foreclosure Mediation Program

The 17th Circuit Residential Foreclosure Mediation Program helps borrowers and lenders communicate to explore options that may resolve the foreclosure process. In 2024, 59% of homeowners who made it through the pre-mediation phase reached agreements with their lenders in mediation, and over 96% of those agreements allowed the homeowners to retain their homes.

This program is available to homeowners in residential foreclosure cases filed in both Winnebago County and Boone County. Program participation is voluntary and homeowners incur no costs for mediation services.

Justice Partner Collaborations

Collaborating with justice partners can improve efficiencies and responses within the justice system.



The 17th Circuit Court is proud to be a part of a number of collaborative projects, including a number of local Coordinating Councils.

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

The Winnebago County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, chaired by Chief Judge John S. Lowry, is a group of various stakeholders in the criminal justice system. Members include representatives from the Court, law enforcement, local prosecutors and defense attorneys, and county and municipal officials. Their task is to ensure that all of the elements of the criminal justice system remain aware of their colleagues' efforts and activities. In addition, local crime and court data are analyzed to ascertain our current status and how improvements might be made.

Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council

The Winnebago County Juvenile Justice Council, chaired by Hon. Donna Honzel, is a group formed pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act. Members include representatives from the court, local prosecutors and defense attorneys, law enforcement, local service agencies and municipal officials. There are currently three committees: Education, Mental Health and Youth Organization.

The Council is tasked with providing a forum for the development of a community-based assessment of the local juvenile justice system, to develop a juvenile justice plan for the prevention of juvenile delinquency and to make recommendations to the county boards for more effectively utilizing existing community resources in dealing with juveniles found to be involved in crime. Additionally, the Council aims to analyze the risks, needs and characteristics of youth in contact with the juvenile justice system with the aim to develop strategies to prevent or mitigate juvenile delinquency, produce positive youth outcomes and enhance public safety.

17th Circuit Human Trafficking Court Response Team (HTCRT)

The 17th Circuit Court formed the HTCRT in 2023. Its mission is to enhance a coordinated response within the justice system to meet the needs of those impacted by human trafficking through trauma-informed practices and to raise awareness of human trafficking among justice system stakeholders by increasing education and training opportunities.

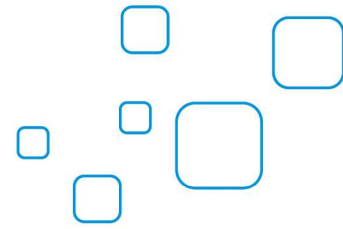
Justice Partner Collaborations



**Family Violence
Coordinating Council**

The 17th Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating Council (FVCC), chaired by Hon. Jennifer Clifford, is a collaborative group of professionals from across disciplines who meet regularly to promote a coordinated response to family violence- including domestic violence, teen dating violence, child abuse, elder abuse, sexual assault, and stalking. The FVCC's five committees focus their efforts in three primary areas: training, prevention, and awareness.

In April 2024, the FVCC hosted "Hands Around the Courthouse" and "Hands Around the Park" to raise awareness for and support Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month in both Winnebago and Boone Counties. In October 2024, the FVCC sponsored Domestic Violence Awareness Month events for Winnebago and Boone counties. These events included a weekly virtual lunch and learn series, a Rockford City Market booth, and the annual Shining the Light on Domestic Violence ceremonies in Boone and Winnebago Counties at the end of the month.



The Kids' Place

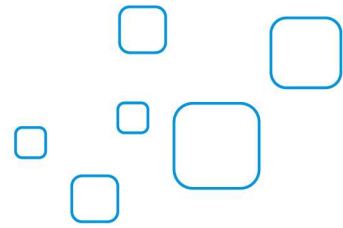
The Kids' Place facilities are secure waiting areas for children ages two through twelve. These facilities are available free of charge to parents and guardians who are required to appear in either the Winnebago County Courthouse or Criminal Justice Center. The Kids' Place facility is located in the lower level of the Winnebago County Courthouse. Children are supervised by professional YMCA staff and provide cheerful atmospheres for children to take part in fun activities like arts, crafts, organized games, reading and music. Since its beginning in 1998, over 53,297 children have used the services of The Kids' Place. In 2024, a total of 528 children were entrusted in the care of the Kids' Place.



Domestic Violence Assistance Center

The Domestic Violence Assistance Center (DVAC) is located in the Winnebago County Courthouse, on the 3rd floor of the "Old Courthouse" above Traffic Court. The DVAC offers free and confidential Order of Protection assistance for those who qualify. For more information contact 815-962-9980.

Justice Partner Collaborations



Children's Safe Harbor

Children's Safe Harbor is located at 1340 S. Alpine Rd in Rockford, Illinois and provides supervised visitation and safe child exchange services. Children's Safe Harbor focuses on the needs of children who may be experiencing difficulties due to divorce, separation or family violence. Families enrolled at Children's Safe Harbor can be ordered by the court, referred by an agency or self-request use of services. Families may utilize Children's Safe Harbor as long as necessary at no cost.

Children's Safe Harbor provides **supervised visitation services** between a non-custodial parent and their child due to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking and child abuse. Parents are court-ordered for Supervised Visitation when it is deemed unsafe for child to be alone with that parent or for other reasons. Children's Safe Harbor's programming is grounded in the belief that domestic violence impacts the whole family; therefore services are rooted in safety of both adult victims and children. Victim safety is considered whether the parent is custodial or non-custodial. Fair and respectful treatment of all family members is provided while not ignoring the circumstances that bring families to the program.

Children's Safe Harbor provides **safe visitation exchanges** without parents coming into contact with one another. Parents enter and exit the visitation center through separate entrances, park in separate parking lots and arrive and depart at pre-scheduled staggered times. Children are escorted by Children's Safe Harbor Staff between parents.

For more information about Children's Safe Harbor contact 815-316-7772 or access www.childrendefeharbor.net.

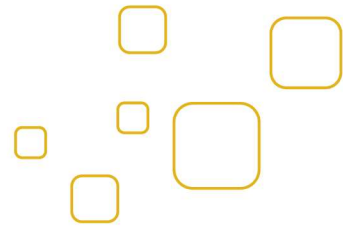
Volunteer Therapy Dog Program

Coming to court can be a stressful experience, but having a therapy dog with you can help ease some of that anxiety. The program launched late 2017, and since inception the Winnebago County Courthouse has had over 579 visits from the therapy dog teams. In 2024, there were 116 visits. Therapy dog teams visited courthouse facilities to support court patrons as well as visit staff located within the courthouse buildings.



Above: Judge John Gibbons visits with Oscar, a therapy dog volunteer.

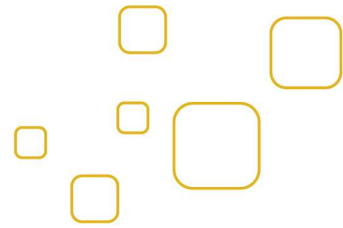
From our Judges



Message from Circuit Judge Lisa Fabiano Presiding Judge of the Civil Division

This June marked the 10-year anniversary of the 17th Circuit's Residential Foreclosure Mediation Program, which was created in response to the housing crisis that arose out of the Great Recession of 2008. Supervised by Judge Barch and run by our very capable Program Coordinator Kyle Thompson-Taylor, the program brings together lenders and homeowners in an attempt to facilitate an agreement between them, whether for a mortgage modification, short sale or other agreeable resolution. It provides homeowners with much needed assistance in understanding their options and assessing their best route forward. The program has been exceptionally successful and to date, it has helped 400 area residents keep their homes. We in the Civil Division are very proud of this program for the valuable service it provides to courts dealing with heavy foreclosure dockets and to area residents struggling to pay their mortgages.

From our Judges

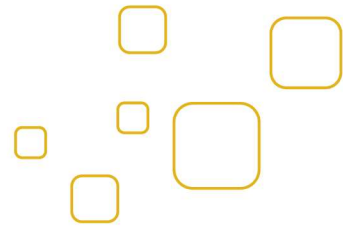


Message from Circuit Judge Brendan A. Maher, Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division

The Pre-Trial Fairness Act - Then and Now:

Early on there were many questions, concerns and doubts about how implementation of the PFA would all work out. Due to the hard work and cooperation of our justice partners, most of the initial concerns have been put to rest. We have collectively made the PFA work as it was intended to work. I am thankful to everyone in every department for all of the hard work and dedication that has been shown along the way. Though we still run into a PFA challenge once in a while, I am confident that we know what to do, and how to do it, when those challenges are presented. On behalf of the Criminal Division, we are thankful for all of the cooperation and work from every department that has gotten us to this point.

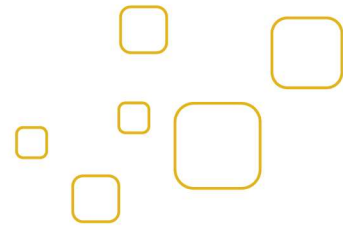
From our Judges



**Message from
Associate Judge Jennifer Clifford,
Presiding Judge of Family Violence
Coordinating Council and Chair of the
Illinois Supreme Court Committee on
Domestic Violence & Human Trafficking**

Chief Judge Lowry and I created the 17th Judicial Circuit Human Trafficking Court Response Team (HTCRT). Our mission was clear – to improve our Court’s response to Human Trafficking. Through that lens, we have created work groups to focus on training justice stakeholders, improving our response in juvenile court and creating awareness by looking beneath the surface and learning the signs of HT. Our recent successes include the formation of a Boone County work group, Human Trafficking 101 training for all probation officers, a Human Trafficking 201 Lunch & Learn, and a Human Trafficking Awareness Month Proclamation by County Board Chairman Joseph Chiarelli. We hosted a training November 1st on the intersection between Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking. Six team members attended the Cook County Human Trafficking Conference August 22-23. For more information about HT and the HTCRT, visit the 17th Circuit Court website at <https://bit.ly/HTCRT>. We are excited for what is to come!

From our Judges



Message from Chief Circuit Judge John S. Lowry, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Division

My appreciation is extended to the Juvenile Justice Center staff and stakeholders who have endured hot and stuffy conditions in the building while the HVAC system was under repair this year. Their resilience and focus have been remarkable!

Together with the dedicated team at the Juvenile Detention Center, they positively impact the lives of youth on several levels. This positive energy was on display as the holiday season approached. The “Adopt an Angel” project connects Juvenile Probation Officers with local businesses to collect and deliver holiday gifts to children involved in the Foster Care Alliance Program. “Adopt an Angel is an awe-inspiring event in which we see the results of the community’s big heart,” said Deputy Director of Probation Taryn Marko.

Judges Martinez and Buhl, with the support of JJC staff and stakeholders, hosted an annual National Adoption Day celebration the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Judge Buhl calls this celebration: “An exciting day full of new beginnings.”

At the Juvenile Detention Center, residents created holiday cards for River Bluff and decorated gingerbread houses for the JDC’s annual contest. This is a popular event each year.

The 17th Circuit is proud to recognize judges and Circuit Court staff for their contributions made State and nationwide, including, but not limited to the following:

Appointments

- Hon. Janet R. Holmgren, President of Illinois Association of Problem-Solving Courts
- Hon. Tamika Walker, President of Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois; Board of Directors of Illinois Bar Foundation
- Emily Behnke, ICJIA Adult Redeploy Illinois Training Advisory Group

Illinois Supreme Court Committee Involvement

- Hon. Kathryn Zenoff, chair of Special Advisory Committee on Justice and Mental Health Planning
- Hon. Eugene Doherty (4th Distr.), chair of e-Business Policy Advisory Board; chair of Data Task Force; Appellate Court Administrative Committee; Judicial College's Committee on Judicial Education
- Hon. Janet R. Holmgren, Special Advisory Committee on Justice and Mental Health Planning and co-chair of Standards/Certification sub-committee; Illinois Judicial College Probation Education's Problem Solving Courts Training Faculty
- Hon. John S. Lowry, Committee on Equal Justice; Data Task Force
- Hon. Brendan A. Maher, Judicial Performance Evaluation Committee
- Hon. Joseph McGraw, ret. Illinois Judicial College Ed Con 2024 Leadership
- Hon. Erin Buhl, Supreme Court of Illinois Judicial College Ed Con 2024 Leadership
- Hon. Jennifer Clifford, chair of Domestic Violence & Human Trafficking; Illinois Judicial College's Committee on Probation Education
- Hon. John Gibbons, Illinois Judicial College's Committee on Trial Court Administrator Education (TCAE)
- Hon. Debra Schafer, Illinois Judicial College Committee on PreTrial Education (CPTE)
- Court Services Director Debbie Jarvis, chair of Illinois Judicial College's Committee on PreTrial Education (CPTE); Chair of Probation Policy Advisory Board
- TCA Tom Jakeway, Illinois Judicial Conference and task forces: AI, Dogs in the Courthouse, Crisis Communication; Illinois Judicial College's Committee on Court Clerk Education, Illinois Judicial College's Committee on Pretrial Education (CPTE); Data Task Force
- Kim Ackmann, Illinois Judicial Conference Task Force member: Recruitment and Retention
- Nikki Ticknor, Illinois Supreme Court's Access to Justice Rules and Policies Review Committee
- Monica Minnis, Illinois Judicial Conference Task Force: Interpreter Education

Presentations

- AOIC Leading Change Series: "Illinois Innovations-17th Circuit Misdemeanor Wellness Track"- Hon. John Gibbons & Emily Behnke
- Court Reporting Services Seminar: "To the Control Room and Beyond-Court Specialists and New Hires" – Tammy Gulley & Robin Winters
- End Violence Against Women International and also Illinois Prosecutor Based Victim Assistance Association: "Interrupting the Cycle of Abuse through Changing the Cycle of Justice" – Hon. Jennifer Clifford & Nicole Ticknor
- ILAPSC Conference 2024: "Navigating Grants" and "The Role of the Coordinator" - Emily Behnke
- Justice Speakers Institute: "Justice Speaks Podcast Episode #60- Navigating Illinois' Problem-Solving Courts" – Hon. Janet Holmgren
- National Interdisciplinary Cannabis Conference: "Medical Marijuana and Treatment Courts" - Hon. Janet Holmgren
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): "Leading the Conversation: Getting to Know your Local PSC" - Emily Behnke
- National Association of Court Management: "Domestic Violence – Creating Informed Leaders and Systems" – Thomas R. Jakeway & Nicole Ticknor
- National Center for State Courts: "Updating Fines, Fees, and Pretrial Practices: An Illinois Case Study" – Hon. Debra Schafer
- Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County: "Veterans Court 17th Judicial Circuit Court Podcast" – Emily Behnke

Ed Con Presenters

Hon. Kathryn E. Zenoff, Hon. Eugene Doherty (4th Distr.), Hon. Janet R. Holmgren, Hon. Stephen Balogh, Hon. Erin Buhl, Hon. John T. Gibbons, Hon. Donna Honzel, Hon. Debra Schafer, Hon. Tamika R. Walker, Tom Jakeway, Kimberly Ackmann

Special Recognitions

- Deputy TCA Emily Behnke: SAMSHA GAINS Trauma-informed Train the Trainer certification
- Deputy TCA Nikki Ticknor: Institute of Court Management Certified Court Manager
- Mike Smith: National Criminal Justice Training Center's Court Safety and Security Committee
- Bailiff of the Year: Donald Prine

2024 Court Data: Clearance Rates

The year end data in this report includes the number of cases filed, number of cases closed and the percentage of cases closed. This measures “**clearance rate**,” or whether the court is able to keep up with its incoming caseload. These numbers can be closely monitored by court administrators, which in turn helps the Chief Judge make important decisions about allocation of the circuit court’s resources.

The **Manual on Recordkeeping**, providing uniform procedures for creation of files and case numbering for Circuit Clerk’s Offices throughout Illinois, was modified January 1, 2022. The modifications made have an impact on how the court collects its statistics.

Revisions of the Manual include several new and revised case category designations:

- LA: Law: Damages over \$50,000. Previously known as the “L” casetype
- FC: Foreclosure. New, previously part of Chancery or “CH” casetypes
- EV: Eviction. New, previously part of Law Minor or “LM” casetypes
- GC: Government Corporation. New. Previously known as the “MC” casetype
- GR: Guardianship. New, previously part of Probate casetypes.
- PR: Probate. Previously known as the “P” casetypes
- DC & DN: Divorce with Children and Divorce without Children, respectively. Previously part of the Dissolution or “D” casetype.
- FA: Family. Previously known as the “F” casetype.
- JV: Previously known as the “J” casetype.
- DV: Domestic Violence. New, previously could be CF or CM casetypes.
- MT: Major Traffic. New, previously could be TR or CM casetypes.
- MX: Miscellaneous Criminal. Previously known as MR.

Additionally, the Manual indicates that in criminal cases, when a complaint, indictment or information contains more than one count, the highest classified charge shall direct the case category assigned to all counts. The hierarchy is: (1) CF, (2) DV, (3) DT, (4) CM, (5) MT, (6) TR, (7) CV, (8) QC, & (9) OV. Multiple charges issued to a defendant out of the same occurrence are now assigned one case number. Previously, before 2022, multiple case numbers would have been assigned. For example, there may have been a Criminal Felony (CF) case and a Traffic (TR) case out of the same occurrence and would have received two case numbers. For the year 2022 and beyond, just one case number would be assigned.

In 2024, total new case filings increased in both Winnebago and Boone Counties.

2024 Court Data

Winnebago County Year End 2024

Winnebago 1st-4th Quarters 2024

CASE TYPE	FILED 1-1-24 to 12-31-24	CLOSED 1-1-24 to 12-31-24	Difference	Percent of Cases Closed	PENDING as of 12-31-23	Cases Reinstated	Adjustment	PENDING as of 12-31-24	Difference	Percent of Pending Closed
Law	L	0	94	#DIV/0!	280	0	-21	165	115	41.07%
Law	LA	398	338	60	578	6	-17	627	-49	-8.48%
Law Magistrate	LM	66	58	8	409	0	-34	383	26	6.36%
Arbitration	AR	808	753	55	438	33	-57	469	-31	-7.08%
Small Claims	SC	4,145	3,448	697	3,333	66	-223	3,873	-540	-16.20%
Chancery	CH	138	133	5	177	0	-21	161	16	9.04%
Eminent Domain	ED	0	1	-1	1	0	0	0	1	100.00%
Foreclosure	FC	374	372	2	313	0	-16	299	14	4.47%
Eviction	EV	2,152	1,950	202	295	17	-77	437	-142	-48.14%
Tax	TX	153	333	-180	301	0	-47	74	227	75.42%
Gov. Corporation	GC	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	#DIV/0!
Municipal Corporation	MC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	#DIV/0!
Misc. Remedy	MR	602	558	44	544	3	-149	442	102	18.75%
Mental Health	MH	670	660	10	83	0	-72	21	62	74.70%
Guardianship	GR	312	257	55	240	0	-7	288	-48	-20.00%
Probate	P	0	172	-172	5,072	2	-20	4,882	190	3.75%
Probate	PR	340	280	60	536	2	-1	597	-61	-11.38%
Adoption	AD	183	173	10	56	0	-1	65	-9	-16.07%
Dissolution	D	0	48	-48	155	0	-10	97	58	37.42%
Dissolution w/ Children	DC	418	352	66	268	3	-12	325	-57	-21.27%
Dissolution w/o Children	DN	521	493	28	254	3	-13	272	-18	-7.09%
Family	F	0	101	-101	702	0	-8	593	109	15.53%
Family	FA	867	660	207	496	2	-139	566	-70	-14.11%
Order of Protection	OP	3,617	3,617	0	0	0	0	0	0	#DIV/0!
Juvenile	J	0	2	-2	112	0	-23	87	25	22.32%
Juvenile	JV	5	8	-3	10	0	-2	5	5	50.00%
Juvenile Abuse & Neg.	JA	437	445	-8	1,113	8	-199	914	199	17.88%
Juvenile Delinquent	JD	353	394	-41	725	0	-330	354	371	51.17%
Criminal Felony	CF	3,241	2,986	255	4,414	4	22	4,695	-281	-6.37%
Criminal Misdemeanor	CM	2,551	2,764	-213	6,193	0	-2	5,978	215	3.47%
Domestic Violence	DV	778	582	196	412	0	-3	605	-193	-46.84%
DUI	DT	825	844	-19	1,733	0	2	1,716	17	0.98%
Major Traffic	MT	4,091	3,999	92	2,213	0	15	2,320	-107	-4.84%
Minor Traffic	TR	17,243	18,665	-1,422	29,469	0	-788	27,259	2,210	7.50%
Ordinance Violation	OV	483	461	22	463	0	1	486	-23	-4.97%
Quasi-Criminal	QC	3	4	-1	3	0	0	2	1	33.33%
Conservation	CV	76	73	3	180	0	0	183	-3	-1.67%
Civil Law	CL	47	52	-5	48	0	-1	42	6	12.50%
Contempt of Court	CC	56	53	3	50	0	-5	48	2	4.00%
Misc. Criminal	MX	2,251	2,198	53	114	1	-126	42	72	63.16%
TOTAL CASES		48,208	48,385	-177	61,783	150	-2,384	59,372	2,411	3.90%

2024 Court Data

Boone County Year End 2024

Boone 1st-4th Quarters 2024

CASE TYPE	FILED 1-1-24 to 12-31-24	CLOSED 1-1-24 to 12-31-24	Difference	Percent of Cases Closed	PENDING as of 12-31-23	Cases Reinstated	Adjustment	PENDING as of 12-31-24	Difference	Percent of Pending Closed
Law	L	0	9	#DIV/0!	18	0	-4	5	13	72.22%
Law	LA	46	27	19	53	0	0	72	-19	-35.85%
Law Magistrate	LM	22	18	4	3	0	1	8	-5	-166.67%
Arbitration	AR	156	123	33	37	1	-1	70	-33	-89.19%
Small Claims	SC	698	710	-12	181	0	16	185	-4	-2.21%
Chancery	CH	20	17	3	19	0	0	22	-3	-15.79%
Eminent Domain	ED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	#DIV/0!
Foreclosure	FC	76	77	-1	62	0	-10	51	11	17.74%
Eviction	EV	100	112	-12	23	0	-1	10	13	56.52%
Tax	TX	26	15	11	1	0	0	12	-11	-1100.00%
Gov. Corporation	GC	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	#DIV/0!
Municipal Corporation	MC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	#DIV/0!
Misc. Remedy	MR	30	33	-3	13	0	-1	9	4	30.77%
Mental Health	MH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	#DIV/0!
Guardianship	GR	45	16	29	38	0	0	67	-29	-76.32%
Probate	P	0	11	-11	53	0	3	45	8	15.09%
Probate	PR	55	51	4	81	0	-1	84	-3	-3.70%
Adoption	AD	8	8	0	4	0	0	4	0	0.00%
Dissolution	D	0	21	-21	9	0	15	3	6	66.67%
Dissolution w/ Children	DC	63	82	-19	65	0	2	48	17	26.15%
Dissolution w/o Children	DN	76	73	3	28	0	0	31	-3	-10.71%
Family	F	0	16	-16	1	0	15	0	1	100.00%
Family	FA	92	88	4	43	1	-1	47	-4	-9.30%
Order of Protection	OP	295	301	-6	17	0	-11	0	17	100.00%
Juvenile	J	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0.00%
Juvenile	JV	3	2	1	0	0	0	1	-1	#DIV/0!
Juvenile Abuse & Neg.	JA	24	30	-6	65	1	-3	57	8	12.31%
Juvenile Delinquent	JD	67	67	0	33	0	0	33	0	0.00%
Criminal Felony	CF	321	345	-24	514	0	6	496	18	3.50%
Criminal Misdemeanor	CM	164	189	-25	672	0	1	648	24	3.57%
Domestic Violence	DV	85	72	13	40	0	-1	52	-12	-30.00%
DUI	DT	230	191	39	366	0	1	406	-40	-10.93%
Major Traffic	MT	1,047	980	67	266	2	-1	334	-68	-25.56%
Minor Traffic	TR	5,447	5,554	-107	8,173	0	-122	7,944	229	2.80%
Ordinance Violation	OV	203	200	3	30	0	-7	26	4	13.33%
Quasi-Criminal	QC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	#DIV/0!
Conservation	CV	4	4	0	1	0	0	1	0	0.00%
Civil Law	CL	6	6	0	1	0	0	1	0	0.00%
Contempt of Court	CC	11	9	2	2	0	0	4	-2	-100.00%
Misc. Criminal	MX	172	166	6	2	0	-2	6	-4	-200.00%
TOTAL CASES		9,593	9,624	-31	10,915	5	-106	10,783	132	1.21%

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