

News for Immediate Release



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

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PA courts financial data now interactive and more accessible in Web-based format

Data dashboards will make it easier to identify court trends and best practices

HARRISBURG—Pennsylvania’s judiciary today unveiled the first in a series of interactive, web-based data dashboards that will allow users to quickly analyze and interpret data related to court cases and court operations. The first four dashboards display data involving the collection and disbursement of court fines, fees, costs and restitution.

“Data dashboards increase transparency, make information more accessible, and identify case trends and best practices to help judges and staff make better informed decisions about court operations,” said Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ronald D. Castille. “We wouldn’t be able to undertake this type of groundbreaking initiative if it weren’t for the dedicated stream of funding we receive from court filing fees.”

The collection rates and distribution of court-ordered fees, fines, costs and restitution are displayed on separate dashboards for the magisterial district and Common Pleas courts. Users can choose to view statewide or individual county data, and break down court collection and distribution data by case type.

Examples of information on the new [dashboards](#) show:

- money collected by Common Pleas courts for criminal cases has trended upward from \$171 million in 2007 to nearly \$206 million in 2013. During the same time period, the distribution of money collected by magisterial district courts dropped from \$271 million to \$249 million, mostly due to fewer traffic citations being issued. The dashboard shows the distribution of traffic fine collections dropped \$14.4 million between 2008 and 2013.
- the state’s general fund has received 60 percent of the more than \$1.8 billion collected by magisterial district courts and 27 percent of the more than \$1.3 billion collected by Common Pleas courts throughout the state between 2007 and 2013. The rest of the money collected by courts was distributed to local governments, crime victims and various entities such as schools, libraries and tax agencies.

- the collection rate of fines, fees, costs and restitution ordered by magisterial district courts in 2007 was more than 96 percent by Dec. 31, 2013. The collection rate for all Common Pleas court-ordered financial obligations in 2007 was 39 percent as of the end of 2013. The rate for Common Pleas courts is lower because the amount of fines, fees, costs and restitution imposed is often higher, and many of the defendants are incarcerated, leading to delayed payments.

These collections rates are measured over years and will continue increasing because many defendants pay court-ordered fines, fees, costs and restitution based on their ability to pay through payment plans that can extend over periods of five, 10, 15 or 20 years or more.

The court financial dashboards include only money distributed to support state and local governments, local entities such as schools and libraries, and crime victims. This money is collected from fines, fees, costs and restitution ordered by 527 magisterial district courts and the criminal divisions of the 67 Common Pleas courts and Philadelphia Municipal Court. The data excludes money collected for bail and from civil cases processed by Pennsylvania's Common Pleas courts and cases processed by the Traffic Division of the Philadelphia Municipal Court. These courts have yet to be integrated on a statewide case management system so that data is not yet available in the database used for these dashboards.

Over the coming weeks and months, the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts will release additional data dashboards displaying criminal and civil caseloads. The dashboards will be updated on an annual basis. They can be found on the Judiciary's website at www.pacourts.us. Go to the Research and Statistics page and click on "Interaction Data Dashboards."

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Editor's Note: On Friday, June 6, at 10 a.m., the AOPC will conduct an instructional **30-minute webinar** for members of the media wishing to learn more about data presented on the court financial dashboards. Contact Steve Schell for more information and instructions on how to participate.

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