

**FRIEND OF THE COURT
ANNUAL GRIEVANCE
REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE**

CALENDAR YEAR 2021

**Michigan Supreme Court
State Court Administrative Office
April 2022**

SUMMARY

The State Court Administrative Office, Friend of the Court Bureau (FOCB), was created by the Friend of the Court Act, 1982 PA 294, MCL 552.501, *et seq.* (the Act). Among other duties, the Act requires the FOCB to collect data on the operations of friend of the court (FOC) offices, including data on all grievances filed with FOCs or the circuit court chief judges and the FOCs' or courts' responses to those grievances. MCL 552.519(3)(d) requires the FOCB to prepare an annual report that provides a summary of the types of grievances each office receives and indicates whether the grievances are resolved or outstanding. This report is the 37th annual grievance report submitted to the Michigan Legislature.

During 2021, 216 grievances were filed with 43 FOC offices¹ - 50 less grievances than in 2020. The grievances raised 373 discrete issues. Of those issues, 58.7 percent (219) were complaints about some aspect of FOC office operations, while 41.3 percent (154) were issues related to an FOC employee's performance.

In the "office operations" category, 32.4 percent (71) raised a child support issue, 25.1 percent (55) focused on parenting time, 11.4 percent (25) involved custody, and 1.8 percent (4) alleged gender bias. The remaining 29.2 percent (64) were classified as "other" because the issues they raised were unique or nearly so, and did not fit into the categories listed above.

In this annual report, grievance responses are grouped into four categories: (1) grievances acknowledged to have merit in full; (2) grievances acknowledged to have merit in part; (3) grievances denied; and (4) grievances deemed nongrievable.² In 2021, 5 grievances were acknowledged to have merit in full, 22 were acknowledged to have merit in part, 151 were denied, 45 were nongrievable, and 5 were pending as of December 31, 2021. In response to grievances, FOCs changed their office procedures in 6 instances and took personnel actions in 9 instances.³

The chart below provides detailed grievance data information. Also attached is a separate summary of grievance processing by FOC Citizen Advisory Committees in the two counties that had committees during 2021.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[SCAO Grievance Forms](#)

[Statute Describing Grievance Process](#)

Attachments: Data Chart, CAC Supplement

¹ Some of the 75 FOC offices did not have a grievance filed in 2021.

² The Act allows individuals to file a grievance related to an FOC employee or office operations. MCL 552.526. Some complaints are based on other factors, and therefore are not considered "grievable". Examples include complaints about the substance of a court ruling, complaints about the substance of an FOC recommendation to a court, and issues that must be addressed by some agency other than the FOC (e.g., complaints about judges and referees who are subject to the Judicial Tenure Commission, complaints about prosecutors who do not charge a person with criminal nonsupport, and complaints about private attorneys who are subject to the Attorney Grievance Commission). The FOCs accept these grievances and respond to them, but the response may simply inform the grievant that the issue is not grievable under the Act.

³ Not all grievances acknowledged in full or in part required a change in office procedures or personnel action. Some grievances merely required corrective action on the case. Even when a grievance is denied, change in practices can result.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE DATA CHART

Total Filed	Number of grievances filed in each office during the reporting year of January 1 through December 31.
Response Over 30 Days	Number of grievances not responded to within the statutorily required time period of 30 days. MCL 552.526.
Duplicate Grievance (DG)	Same party filed a grievance on the same issue.
Same Grievance Filed With the Citizen Advisory Committee (CA)	The same grievance filed with the FOC and a citizen advisory committee.
Same Party/ New Grievance (SP)	Same party filed a prior grievance dealing with items not addressed in current grievance.

Grievance Issue Categories:

Employee (Empl)	Number of grievances filed that concerned an employee.
Office Operations	This broad category (for which the charts do not show a cumulative number) includes grievances regarding support, parenting time, custody, gender, or “other.” The chart provides numbers for each of those “office operations” components.
Support (S)	Number of grievances in which support-related concerns were at issue.
Parenting Time (PT)	Number of grievances in which parenting time concerns were at issue.
Custody (C)	Number of grievances in which custody concerns were at issue.
Gender-Based (GB)	Number of grievances in which gender concerns were at issue.
Other (O)	Number of grievances in which other concerns not related to support, parenting time, custody, or gender were at issue.

Possible Grievance Responses:

Acknowledged in Full (AF)	Merit in grievance.
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Acknowledged in Part (AP)	Merit in part of grievance.
Denied (D)	No merit in grievance.
Nongrievable (NG)	Issue does not come under the grievance procedure.
Pending Response (PR)	Number of grievances not resolved at the time the grievance report was submitted to the State Court Administrative Office.

Grievance Results:

Change in Policy/ Operations (CO)	Grievance resulted in change in office operations.
Personnel Action (PA)	Grievance resulted in personnel or employee action.
No Action (NA)	No change in policy or personnel action.

Notes
 A single grievance may involve both office operations and an employee. Therefore, the total number of grievances filed may be less than the sum of employee-related grievances plus office operations grievances.

A grievance may involve multiple concerns that require an FOC response. One response may address multiple concerns. Therefore, the total number of grievance concerns reported here (e.g., support, parenting time, custody, gender, or “other”) may exceed the total number of grievances filed. Also, one FOC response may address multiple concerns.

2021 ANNUAL GRIEVANCE REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

County	2021 total filed	Response over 30 days	Multiple Grievances			Types of Grievance Issues					Grievance Response Category					Grievance Result				
			DG	CA	SP	GB/O EMPL	S	PT	C	GB	O	A/F	A/P	D	NG	PR	CO	PA	NA	
ALCONA/ ARENAC/ IOSCO/ OSCODA	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
ALGER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ALLEGAN	5	0	0	0	0	5	3	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	0	1	0	1	3	
ALPENA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
ANTRIM/ GRAND TRAVERSE/LEELANAU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
BARAGA/HOUGHTON/ KEWEENAW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
BARRY	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	
BAY	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	4	
BENZIE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
BERRIEN	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
BRANCH	3	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	
CALHOUN	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	
CASS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
CHARLEVOIX	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
CHEBOYGAN	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
CHIPPEWA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
CLARE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
CLINTON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
CRAWFORD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
DELTA	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
DICKINSON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
EATON	10	0	0	0	0	10	4	8	5	0	5	0	0	10	1	0	0	0	10	
EMMET	4	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	2	
GENESEE	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	
GLADWIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
GOGEBIC	4	0	0	0	2	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	1	2	

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			DG	CA	SP	GB/O EMPL	S	PT	C	GB	O	A/F	A/P	D	NG	PR	CO	PA	NA
GRATIOT	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
HILLSDALE	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
HURON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
INGHAM	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	1	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	2
IONIA	7	0	0	0	3	4	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	4	3	0	0	0	7
IRON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ISABELLA	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
JACKSON	5	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	4	0	0	0	6
KALAMAZOO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KALKASKA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KENT	12	0	0	1	0	5	7	3	0	1	1	0	0	9	3	0	0	0	12
LAKE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LAPEER	3	0	0	0	0	4	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
LENAWEE	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
LIVINGSTON	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
LUCE	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
MACKINAC	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
MACOMB	14	1	0	0	0	4	4	6	5	0	5	0	2	12	0	0	0	1	13
MANISTEE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MARQUETTE	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
MASON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MECOSTA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MENOMINEE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIDLAND	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISSAUKEE/ WEXFORD	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
MONROE	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
MONTCALM	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	4
MONTMORENCY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MUSKEGON	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
NEWAYGO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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OAKLAND	68	0	9	0	4	59	30	11	3	0	2	2	3	52	11	0	3	0	65
OCEANA	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OGEMAW	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
ONTONAGON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OSCEOLA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTSEGO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTTAWA	8	0	2	0	1	8	7	6	1	0	6	1	0	7	5	0	0	1	8
PRESQUE ISLE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ROSCOMMON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAGINAW	8	0	1	0	0	7	0	3	2	0	3	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	8
ST. CLAIR	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
ST. JOSEPH	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
SANILAC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SCHOOLCRAFT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SHIAWASSEE	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
TUSCOLA	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
VAN BUREN	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
WASHTENAW	6	0	1	0	0	3	1	3	0	0	1	0	3	3	0	1	0	0	6
WAYNE	15	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	14	2	1	12	0	0	0	3	12
Totals	216	3	13	1	15	154	71	55	25	4	64	5	22	151	45	5	6	9	201

**State Court Administrative Office (SCAO)
Friend of the Court Bureau (FOCB)
2021 Citizen Advisory Committee Report to the Legislature**

This report summarizes the current status of the Friend of the Court Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs). A brief history of the CACs can be found in the [SCAO's 2004 Annual Grievance Report to the Legislature](#).

In January 2022, the SCAO/FOCB contacted all friend of the court (FOC) directors and asked if they had an active CAC in their county. Based on the responses from the directors, the two counties with active CACs (Kent County and Macomb County) were sent the annual CAC reporting forms.

Kent County CAC

The Kent County CAC met six times. The Kent County CAC held its meetings in January, March, and May. August, September, and November. It submitted minutes after each meeting to the county board of commissioners. Written reports were submitted to the court and county board of commissioners annually.

A subcommittee was formed to review grievances. There was one grievance filed directly with the CAC. The grievance raised a child support issue, and the CAC disagreed in full with the grievance. The CAC received and reviewed every grievance filed with the Kent County FOC. Those 12 grievances raised seven child support issues, three parenting time issues, and four issues considered "other." The CAC fully agreed with the FOC for eleven grievances and partially agreed with the FOC on one grievance. The Kent County CAC stated that no problems impeded the committee's functions and activities for 2021.

Macomb County CAC

The Macomb County CAC met six times in 2021, with meetings scheduled as needed. Minutes were submitted to the county board with the CAC's annual report to the court and county board of commissioners, and additional advice from the CAC was provided as requested.

There were no grievances filed directly with the CAC. The CAC used a computer-generated program to randomly select nine grievances to review that were filed with the FOC office. Those nine grievances raised six employee issues and five issues considered "other." The CAC fully agreed with the FOC regarding all nine grievance responses and no action was taken. The Macomb County CAC states that no problems impeded the committee's functions and activities for 2021.