

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

CALENDAR YEAR 2020

**Michigan Supreme Court
State Court Administrative Office**

April 2021

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 36th annual grievance report submitted to the Michigan Legislature.

During 2020, 266 grievances were filed with 42 FOC offices¹ - 72 less grievances than in 2019. The grievances raised 450 discrete issues. Of those issues, 58.2 percent (262) were complaints about some aspect of FOC office operations, while 41.8 percent (188) were issues related to an FOC employee's performance.

In the "office operations" category, 44.7 percent (117) raised a child support issue, 22.9 percent (60) focused on parenting time, 7.6 percent (20) involved custody, and 0.4 percent (1) alleged gender bias. The remaining 24.4 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 2020, 10 grievances were acknowledged to have merit in full, 21 were acknowledged to have merit in part, 188 were denied, 57 were nongrievable, and 8 were pending as of December 31, 2020. In response to grievances, FOCs changed their office procedures in 5 instances and took personnel actions in 24 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 2020.

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 2020.

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.

2020 ANNUAL GRIEVANCE REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

County	2020 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	1
ALGER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ALLEGAN	6	0	1	0	0	6	4	2	2	0	2	0	2	0	6	3	0	2	5
ALPENA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ANTRIM/ GRAND TRAVERSE/LEELANAU	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
BARAGA/HOUGHTON/ KEWEENAW	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
BARRY	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
BAY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BENZIE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BERRIEN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BRANCH	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
CALHOUN	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
CASS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHARLEVOIX	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
CHEBOYGAN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
DICKINSON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EATON	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
EMMET	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
GENESEE	3	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
GLADWIN	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
GOGEBIC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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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	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
HILLSDALE	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
HURON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
INGHAM	11	0	2	0	0	12	7	5	1	1	6	0	0	8	0	1	0	0	11
IONIA	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
IRON	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
ISABELLA	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
JACKSON	3	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
KALAMAZOO	4	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	4
KALKASKA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KENT	11	0	1	0	0	7	5	2	1	0	4	1	2	4	4	0	0	2	9
LAKE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LAPEER	4	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	4
LENAWEE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LIVINGSTON	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
LUCE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MACKINAC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MACOMB	17	3	0	0	1	23	6	8	4	0	5	0	0	16	2	0	0	2	16
MANISTEE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MARQUETTE	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
MASON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MECOSTA	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
MENOMINEE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIDLAND	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
MISSAUKEE/ WEXFORD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MONROE	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
MONTCALM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MONTMORENCY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MUSKEGON	6	0	0	0	1	1	4	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	3	0	1	0	5
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	103	0	14	0	6	70	61	13	4	0	3	3	5	71	24	0	2	3	98
OCEANA	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
OGEMAW	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
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	12	1	5	0	0	12	3	10	2	0	7	0	1	10	5	1	0	1	10
PRESQUE ISLE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ROSCOMMON	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
SAGINAW	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
ST. CLAIR	4	0	0	0	0	3	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	0	0	4
ST. JOSEPH	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TUSCOLA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
VAN BUREN	5	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	4
WASHTENAW	5	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	1	3
WAYNE	32	1	0	0	0	13	1	0	0	0	22	6	3	24	2	0	0	8	27
Totals	266	6	24	0	13	188	117	60	20	1	64	10	21	188	57	8	5	24	237

**State Court Administrative Office (SCAO)
Friend of the Court Bureau (FOCB)
2020 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 2021, 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 deviated from its normal bimonthly schedule and held its meetings in January, March, July, August, September, and November as a result of COVID-19 complications. 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 were no grievances filed directly with the committee. The CAC received and reviewed every grievance filed with the Kent County FOC. Those ten grievances (as of the date of the CAC's last meeting in 2020) raised four child support issues, two parenting time issues, one custody issue, and five issues considered "other." The CAC fully agreed with the FOC for all ten grievances. The Kent County CAC stated that there were no problems besides COVID-19 that impeded the committee's functions and activities for 2020.

Macomb County CAC

The Macomb County CAC met three times in 2020. The Macomb County CAC deviated from its normal schedule and only met in February, September, and October as a result of COVID-19 complications. 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 seven grievances to review that were filed with the FOC office. Those seven grievances raised three gender-based issues, five other employee issues, three support issues, three parenting time issues, two custody issues, and two issues considered "other." The CAC fully agreed with the FOC regarding all seven grievance responses. The CAC found that in each of the gender-based grievances, the FOC decision was based on the best interests of the child. The Macomb County CAC states that there were no problems besides COVID-19 that impeded the committee's functions and activities for 2020.