



Michigan Trial Courts Judicial Weighted Caseload Study

Final Report

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- Hon. Travis Reeds (Michigan District Judges Association)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

For close to three decades, the Michigan State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) has relied on the use of a weighted caseload model to assess the number of judges needed to handle the work of the trial courts on a biennial basis. Periodic updates of the weighted caseload formula are important to ensure that the model accurately reflects the way cases should be handled and to accurately assess judicial staffing needs. Michigan’s first weighted caseload study was conducted by the Trial Court Assessment Commission (TCAC) and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) in 1998. Since that time, the judicial workload model has undergone regular updates to maintain its validity in the face of changes in the law, court procedures, and technology. Various interim adjustments to the model have been made by SCAO, and the NCSC completed judicial weighted caseload studies in 2011 and 2017.

In November 2023, SCAO again commissioned NCSC to conduct another comprehensive update of the judicial weighted caseload model. Unlike previous weighted caseload studies conducted in

Michigan, this project focused on all case processing staff associated with the Michigan trial courts. The current report focuses only on judges, but additional study groups included referees, magistrates, probate registers, court clerks, court officers, court reporters/recorders, friend of the court staff, and judicial assistants. A full report, including the methodology and case weights for each of the other groups is provided under separate cover.

Weighted caseload studies provide courts with objective information about judicial staffing needs based on the amount of time required to process various types of cases. This information is useful in helping to determine the number of judges needed to cover the courts’ work, based on the number and types of cases filed.

Nominees were seated by various associations and organizations across the state to serve on a Judicial Resource Assessment Committee (JRAC) for this project.¹ The JRAC included seven trial court judges, two referees, two magistrates, one probate register, and three court administrators. Additionally, SCAO staff participated in all meetings. The NCSC consultants, with guidance from the JRAC, designed and conducted the study to produce a weighted caseload model for judges in the Michigan trial courts.

¹ Please see the acknowledgements on the previous page for the associations represented on the JRAC.

The weighted caseload study included the collection of three types of data: (1) work time data recorded by judicial officers during a one-month period, (2) a survey of participating circuit, probate, and district court judicial officers requesting their assessment of the extent to which they have adequate time to perform their duties to their satisfaction; and (3) quality adjustment sessions to review case weights identified by the JRAC for potential adjustment.

The case weights reflect the average number of case-related minutes that judges spend per year processing each of the different case types; they are based upon work time recorded by time study participants in the Michigan trial courts during a one-month study period. The case weights and other components of the weighted caseload model were reviewed and approved by the JRAC.

This study is comprehensive and reliable because:

- It was designed and conducted by NCSC consultants who are national experts in the development of weighted caseload models for courts and other justice system agencies.
- A high percentage (97%) of circuit, probate, and district court judges participated in the study, which substantially enhances the credibility and validity of the data collected.
- It included a survey of judicial officers to assess whether they have adequate time to achieve reasonable levels of quality in performing their duties.

- The NCSC consultants conducted a total of nine focus group meetings involving knowledgeable judicial officers prior to the time study to review the case weights and activities identified for the study.
- It also included four quality adjustments sessions held with judicial officers in the circuit, probate, district and problem-solving courts. Only those case types identified by the JRAC were reviewed during these sessions to determine if they needed to be adjusted for any reason.

NCSC consultants organized the project around the following primary tasks:

1. **Development of research design.** The JRAC met with the NCSC consultants in January 2024 to provide guidance for the weighted caseload study. The JRAC provided advice and feedback on the overall study design, which case types and activities to include in the weighted caseload model, the methodology, content, and schedule of the focus groups and training sessions prior to the time study, and the duration of the time study. The JRAC also made final decisions about the recommended case weight revisions suggested by the quality adjustment panels.
2. **Nine focus groups.** During April and May 2024, NCSC staff conducted nine focus group discussions via Zoom with experienced judicial officers primarily to review the case types and activities. However, the focus groups also included discussions regarding judicial officers' reflections on their typical caseloads, whether they feel there

is sufficient time to complete their work, challenges and obstacles to their work, and other factors that might affect workload. One focus group was held with each of the primary court groups, including circuit civil court judges, circuit criminal court judges, circuit family/probate family court judges, probate judges, district civil court judges, district criminal court judges, magistrates, and referees.

3. Trial court judicial officer time study.

During the study time, the state had 557 filled judgeships, and two vacancies, for a total of 559 judges.² Ninety percent of those judicial officers participated in the one-month time study conducted between September 16 and October 15, 2024. Before the time study began, an NCSC consultant conducted two one-hour training webinars to provide detailed instructions on how all participants should track and record their work time. One of these sessions was also recorded for judges who were unable to attend a live session, which could be accessed as they had time. The NCSC also provided both written instructions and an online help link to participants who had questions about recording time and categorizing information. During the time study, judicial officers kept records of all time spent on case-related and non-case-specific activities and entered their work

time data in the NCSC’s secure online data entry website.

4. Adequacy of Time Survey.

After the time study data collection period, 246 judicial officers completed an online adequacy of time survey regarding the sufficiency of time available during regular working hours to do their work. The survey results revealed that most judicial officers believe they “usually” have enough time to effectively handle their daily tasks.

5. Data Analysis and development of preliminary case weights.

NCSC staff analyzed the data collected from the time study and adequacy of time survey, and then drafted reports, including tables and preliminary case weights for review by SCAO and the JRAC.

6. Four Quality Adjustment Sessions.

Quality adjustments sessions were held among judicial officers from circuit, probate, district and problem-solving courts. Only those case types identified by the JRAC were reviewed during these sessions to determine if they needed to be adjusted for any reason.

7. JRAC review, discussion, and decision-making.

The NCSC, SCAO, and JRAC held a final meeting on March 17, 2025, to review the

² One additional judgeship in circuit court and one judgeship in probate court were added on January 1, 2025.

quantitative and qualitative data and make final decisions based on adequacy of time survey and quality adjustment panel recommendations. After reviewing all the data and recommendations, the committee accepted and approved the case weights, including the quality adjusted recommendations.

8. Preparation of the Final Report.

After the March 17, 2025, meeting, NCSC staff developed a draft report of findings for review by the SCAO.

Findings

The final report explains in detail each step in the research and data analysis process for this weighted caseload study and the development of the weighted caseload model. The weighted caseload model is sufficiently flexible and provides SCAO with the framework to determine the approximate need for judicial officers across the state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The NCSC encourages the Court to consider the following recommendations regarding the ongoing use of the weighted caseload model.

Recommendation 1

The NCSC recommends updating the trial court judicial needs assessment model annually by inserting new case filings from the average of the most recent three years of reliable filings.

Recommendation 2

The NCSC recommends that SCAO continue to utilize the secondary analysis to further assess the need for judges at individual court locations.

Recommendation 3

Over time, the integrity of any weighted caseload model may be affected by external factors such as changes in legislation, case law, legal practice, court technology, and administrative policies. NCSC recommends that SCAO conduct a comprehensive review of the weighted caseload model every five to seven years. This review should include a time study in which all or most trial court judicial officers participate. Between updates, if a major change in the law appears to have a significant impact on workload, the NCSC recommends that the SCAO employ a process like the quality adjustment sessions used in this study to make interim adjustments to the affected case weight(s).

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction to Weighted Caseload

The weighted caseload method of workload analysis is grounded in the understanding that different types of court cases vary in complexity, and consequently in the amount of judicial work they require. For example, a capital felony generally requires a greater need for judicial resources than a non-capital felony case. The weighted caseload method calculates the need for judges based on each court's total workload. The weighted caseload formula consists of three critical elements:

1. *Case filings*, or the average number of new cases of each type filed during the most recent three years,
2. *Case weights*, which represent the average amount of judicial officer time required to handle cases of each type each year, and
3. The *year value*, or the amount of time each judicial officer has available for case-related work in one year.

Total annual workload is calculated by multiplying the average annual filings for each case type by the corresponding case weight, then summing the workload across all case types. Each court's workload is then divided by the year value to determine the total number of full-time equivalent judges needed to handle the workload.

B. Weighted Caseload Assessment Methodology

The judicial weighted caseload study was conducted in two phases:

1. A *time study* in which all circuit court, probate court, and district court judges were asked to record all case-related and non-case-related work over a four-week period. The time study provides an empirical description of the amount of time currently devoted to processing each case type, as well as the division of the judicial workday between case-related and non-case-related activities.

In past judicial weighted caseload studies conducted in Michigan, referees, magistrates, and probate registers were included in the time study, and their work was factored into the case weights. Since these positions cannot engage in all judicial functions, and since the level of these resources varies by location, the SCAO used judicial proportions to determine the percentage of a court's work that was conducted by judges that is completed by judges, and what proportion was conducted by the other non-judge positions. Since the current study included time studies by all case-processing staff, including referees, magistrates, and probate registers, separate case weights were generated for all positions, negating the need to determine judicial proportions. For this reason, the current weights from this study are not directly comparable to those of previous studies.

2. A *quality adjustment* process to ensure that the final weighted caseload model incorporates sufficient time for efficient and effective case processing. The quality adjustment process included:

- a statewide *adequacy of time survey* asking judges about the amount of time currently available to perform various case-related tasks, and
- a structured review of the case weights by a set of *quality adjustment panels* comprising experienced judges from across the state of Michigan.

The Judicial Resources Advisory Committee (JRAC), a committee consisting of 16 representatives from the Michigan courts' judicial and administrative associations and SCAO, provided guidance on matters of policy throughout the weighted caseload study. JRAC advised NCSC on the categorization of case types, the time study design, and how to incorporate the work of referees, magistrates, probate registers, and visiting judges into the model. JRAC also made policy decisions regarding the amount of time allocated to case-related and non-case-related work (judge day and year values and administrative adjustments) and quality adjustments to the model.

II. CASE TYPES AND EVENTS

The first task in the weighted caseload was to establish the case type and event categories upon which to base the time study. Together, case-related events, and non-case-related

events describe all the work of Michigan's trial court judges.

A. Case Type Categories

Separate sets of case type categories were established for each trial court level (circuit, probate, and district). Each set of case type categories satisfied the following requirements:

- The case type categories are both mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive, meaning that any given case falls into one, and only one, case type category,
- Categories are legally and logically distinct,
- Categories are associated with meaningful differences in the amount of judicial work required,
- There are sufficient case filings in each category to develop a valid case weight, and
- Filings for all case type categories are tracked consistently and reliably by SCAO.

Using the case type categories from the previous weighted caseload model as a starting point, JRAC defined 24 case types for circuit court, 15 case types for probate court, and 10 case types for district court (Figure 1). For greater detail on the case type categories, including their 2-letter case type designations, please refer to Appendix A. Circuit and district court case types included nine problem-solving court case types in the circuit court and five in the district court. See Appendix A for the explanatory case codes within each category.

For purposes of the weighted caseload model and the time study, problem-solving courts were

defined as problem-solving court programs that satisfy the following criteria:

1. The program meets the SCAO-certified, evidence-based problem-solving court program,
2. The program has an enabling statute, and
3. The program submits data through DCCMIS³ to SCAO.

In the previous weighted caseload study, adult drug court and sobriety court cases were combined into a single category because many courts handle such cases together in hybrid problem-solving court programs. While hybrid courts still exist, JRAC agreed there are differences in the amount of time spent with participants in both courts, so they were separated for the current study. Specialty dockets that do not meet the formal definition of a problem-solving court (e.g., “baby court”) were not counted as problem-solving courts. Cases on these dockets are counted in the weighted caseload model under the case type under which the original case was filed.

Figure 1: Case Type Categories

Circuit Court

- Capital Felony and Felony Juvenile
 - Noncapital Felony
 - Auto Negligence
 - Medical Malpractice
 - Other Civil
 - Business Court
 - Divorce without Children
 - Divorce with Children
 - Non-Divorce Domestic
 - PPO/ERPO
 - Adoption
 - Other Family
 - Juvenile Delinquency and Designated
 - Child Protective Proceedings
 - Appeals and Other
-
- Circuit Adult Drug Court
 - Circuit Sobriety Hybrid
 - Circuit Juvenile Drug Court
 - Circuit Family Dependency Treatment Court
 - Circuit Veterans Treatment Court
 - Circuit Adult Mental Health Court
 - Circuit Juvenile Mental Health Court
 - Circuit Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program
-

³ DCCMIS – Drug Court Case Management Information System

District Court

- Felony
- Misdemeanor
- Non-Traffic Civil Infractions
- Traffic Misdemeanor
- Traffic Civil Infractions
- OWI Misdemeanor
- OWI Felony
- General Civil
- Small Claims
- Landlord-Tenant/Land Contract

- District Adult Drug Court
- District Sobriety Court
- District Veterans Treatment Court
- District Adult Mental Health Court

Probate Court

- Supervised and Unsupervised Estates
- Small Estates
- Trusts
- Conservatorships and Protective Orders
- Adult Guardianships
- Minor Guardianships
- Judicial Admissions and Mental Commitments
- Other Probate
- General Civil

B. Case-Related Event Categories

To describe case-related work in more detail, JRAC defined case-related event categories that cover the complete life cycle of each case. Case-related events cover all work related to an individual case before the court, including on-bench work (e.g., hearings) and off-bench work (e.g., reading case files, preparing orders). A uniform set of case-related event categories applies to circuit court, probate court, and district court cases. Figure 2 shows the case-related event categories. See Appendix B for their definitions.

Figure 2: Case-Related Events

- Pre-Disposition/Non-Trial Disposition
 - Trial
 - Post-Disposition
 - Case-Specific Certified Problem-Solving Court Time
 - Specialized docket Work
 - Friend of the Court Work
 - Case-Related Clerical Work
 - Probation Officer Work
-

C. Non-Case-Related Event Categories

Work that is not related to a particular case before the court, such as court management, committee meetings, travel, and judicial education, is also an essential part of the judicial workday. To compile a detailed profile of judges’ non-case-related activities and provide an empirical basis for the construction of the judge day and year values, JRAC defined twelve non-case-related event categories (Exhibit 3). To simplify the task of completing the time study forms and aid in validation of the time study data, vacation and other leave, lunch and breaks, and time spent filling out time study forms were included as non-case-related events.

Figure 3: Non-Case-Related Events

Non-Case-Related Administration
Chief Judge/Chief Judge Pro Tem/Presiding Judge
Judicial Education and Training
General Legal Reading
Community Activities and Public Outreach
On-Call/After-Hours Review and Issuance of Warrants
Staff Meetings, Union Meetings, Committees/Related Work
Employee Wellness Activities During <u>Paid</u> Work Hours
Non-Case-Related Problem-Solving Court Activities
Travel
Vacation/Sick Leave/Personal Day
Time Study Tracking and Data Entry

III. TIME STUDY

To measure current practice—the amount of time judicial officers currently spend handling cases of each type, as well as on non-case-related work—NCSC conducted a one-month time study. During the time study, all circuit court, probate court, and district court judges were asked to track their working time by case type and event. Separately SCAO provided counts of filings by case type category and court. NCSC used the time study and a three-year average of case filings to calculate the average number of minutes spent resolving cases within each case type category (preliminary case weights). The time study results also informed JRAC’s selections of day and year values for case-related work, as well as administrative adjustments for chief judges and problem-solving court judges.

A. Data Collection

1. Time Study

The time study occurred during a one-month period, from September 16 through October 15, 2024. During the time study, all circuit court, probate court, and district court judges were asked to track all working time by case type category and case-related event (for case-related work) or by non-case-related event (for non-case-related activities). Judges were instructed to record all working time, including time spent handling cases on and off the bench, non-case-related work, and any after-hours or weekend work. Participants tracked their time using a web-based form.

To maximize data quality, time study participants engaged in a webinar training session explaining how to categorize and record their time. In addition to the training, participants were provided with web-based reference materials, and an on-line Help Link was available to participants who had questions about the time study or how to enter specific data. The web-based method of data collection allowed time study participants to verify that their own data were accurately entered and permitted real-time monitoring of participation rates, maximizing the quality and completeness of the time study data. Data were weighted to compensate for missing entries (e.g., temporary absences from the bench, vacancies, and non-participants).

Across Michigan, 97% of all active judges participated in the time study. This extremely high participation rate ensured sufficient data to

develop an accurate and reliable profile of current practice in Michigan’s trial courts.

2. Caseload Data

To translate the time study data into the average amount of time expended on each type of case (preliminary case weights), it was first necessary to determine how many cases of each type are filed on an annual basis. The SCAO provided filings data for calendar years 2021, 2022, and 2023 for each court and case type.

Most of the filing data provided by SCAO was extracted from the Caseload Reporting System (CRS) through which courts submit annual caseload counts. SCAO provided NCSC with new filings for every case type group, except child protective cases. For those cases, the number of children associated with new filings were used instead of the number of petitions filed. The Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) filings were obtained from the Judicial Data Warehouse (JDW) for the cases filed mid-February through December 2024. Because there was not an entire year’s worth of data at the time of analysis, the partial year data was used to estimate annualized ERPO counts for all of 2024. For problem-solving courts, SCAO used DCCMIS to obtain the number of admissions for the three years.

The caseload data for all three years were then averaged to provide an annual count of filings, shown in Figure 4. The ERPO filings were not averaged because there was only one year of filing data. The use of a three-year average rather than the caseload data for a single year minimizes the potential for temporary

fluctuations in caseloads to influence the case weights or calculations of judicial workload.

Figure 4: 3-Average Annual Filings or Admissions

Circuit Court	Annual Filings/Admissions Average (2021, 2022, 2023)
Capital Felony and Felony Juvenile	2,949
Noncapital Felony	41,868
Auto Negligence	19,061
Medical Malpractice	673
Other Civil	16,743
Business Court	2,858
Divorce without Children	17,802
Divorce with Children	14,800
Non-Divorce Domestic	32,550
PPO/ERPO	33,621
Adoption	2,994
Other Family	5,081
Juvenile Delinquency and Designated	22,347
Child Protective Proceedings	6,825
Appeals and Other	2,693
Circuit Adult Drug Court	551
Circuit Sobriety Court	354
Circuit Juvenile Drug Court	56
Circuit Family Dependency Treatment Court	44
Circuit Veterans Treatment Court	49
Circuit Adult Mental Health Court	165
Circuit Juvenile Mental Health Court	67
Circuit Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program	309

	Annual Filings/Admissions Average (2021, 2022, 2023)
District Court	
Felony	66,718
Misdemeanor	105,223
Non-Traffic Civil Infractions	63,684
Traffic Misdemeanor	223,751
Traffic Civil Infractions	872,085
OWI Misdemeanor	22,424
OWI Felony	3,432
General Civil	227,223
Small Claims	28,234
Landlord-Tenant/Land Contract	161,744
District Adult Drug Court	241
District Sobriety Court	1,216
District Veterans Treatment Court	152
District Adult Mental Health Court	511
Probate Court	
Supervised and Unsupervised Estates	22,207
Small Estates	4,569
Trusts	1,120
Conservatorships and Protective Orders	4,162
Adult Guardianships	11,491
Minor Guardianships	3,982
Judicial Admissions and Mental Commitments	17,435
Other Probate	1,415
General Civil	298

B. Preliminary Case Weights

Following the one-month data collection period, the time study and caseload data were used to calculate preliminary case weights. The preliminary case weight represents the average amount of time judicial officers currently spend processing a case of a particular type, from pre-filing activity through all post-judgment matters. The use of a separate case weight for each case type category accounts for the fact that cases of varying levels of complexity require different amounts of judicial time for effective resolution.

To calculate the preliminary case weights, presented in Figure 5, the case-related time recorded during the time study for each case type category was weighted to the equivalent of annualized time for all judges statewide. The total annual time for each case type was then divided by the average annual filings to yield the average amount of hands-on time judicial officers currently spend on each case. JRAC reviewed the preliminary case weights and identified a handful of case types for further review by the quality adjustment panels.

Figure 5: Preliminary Case Weights⁴

Circuit Court	Annual Filings/Admissions Average (2021, 2022, 2023)	Preliminary Case Weight (minutes)
Capital Felony and Felony Juvenile	2,949	930
Noncapital Felony	41,868	122
Auto Negligence	19,061	96
Medical Malpractice	673	511
Other Civil	16,743	147
Business Court	2,858	236
Divorce without Children	17,802	54
Divorce with Children	14,800	188
Non-Divorce Domestic	32,550	48
PPO/ERPO	33,621	32
Adoption	2,994	50
Other Family	5,081	24
Juvenile Delinquency and Designated	22,347	71
Child Protective Proceedings	6,825	258
Appeals and Other	2,693	93
Circuit Adult Drug Court	551	477
Circuit Sobriety Court	354	181
Circuit Juvenile Drug Court	56	464
Circuit Family Dependency Treatment Court	44	1,020
Circuit Veterans Treatment Court	49	589
Circuit Adult Mental Health Court	165	661
Circuit Juvenile Mental Health Court	67	121
Circuit Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program	309	100

⁴ Note that the case weights for probate court cases do not include time submitted by probate registers as they have in prior judicial workload assessments. Because all court staff were included in the larger weighted caseload study this year, probate registers' time was measured separately. This change resulted in overall lower case weights for probate court case types than were computed in previous studies.

District Court	Annual Filings/Admissions Average (2021, 2022, 2023)	Preliminary Case Weight (minutes)
Felony	66,718	52
Misdemeanor	105,223	42
Non-Traffic Civil Infractions	63,684	7
Traffic Misdemeanor	223,751	8
Traffic Civil Infractions	872,085	1
OWI Misdemeanor	22,424	57
OWI Felony	3,432	41
General Civil	227,223	10
Small Claims	28,234	8
Landlord-Tenant/Land Contract	161,744	14
District Adult Drug Court	241	740
District Sobriety Court	1,216	365
District Veterans Treatment Court	152	609
District Adult Mental Health Court	511	376

Probate Court	Annual Filings/Admissions Average (2021, 2022, 2023)	Preliminary Case Weight (minutes)
Supervised and Unsupervised Estates	22,207	20
Small Estates	4,569	5
Trusts	1,120	239
Conservatorships and Protective Orders	4,162	86
Adult Guardianships	11,491	78
Minor Guardianships	3,982	104
Judicial Admissions and Mental Commitments	17,435	16
Other Probate	1,415	49
General Civil	298	259

IV. QUALITY ADJUSTMENT

The preliminary case weights generated during the time study measure the amount of time judicial officers in Michigan’s trial courts *currently* spend handling various types of cases, but do not necessarily indicate whether this is the amount of time they *should* spend. To ensure that the weighted caseload model provides adequate time for effective case handling, NCSC and JRAC conducted a comprehensive quality adjustment process that included a statewide *adequacy of time survey* as well as a series of in-person *quality adjustment panels*.

A. Adequacy of Time Survey

To provide a statewide perspective on areas of concern related to current practice, all circuit court, probate court, and district court judicial officers were asked to complete a web-based adequacy of time survey in October 2024. The survey included questions about whether the time study period was representative of a typical month, whether judicial officers feel there is sufficient time to complete work to the individuals’ satisfaction, stress levels associated with work, and what obstacles, if any, prevent

judicial officers from being successful in their jobs.

Approximately three-quarters of judges (73%) who responded to the survey indicated that the data collection period was representative of a typical one-month period (83% of circuit court judges, 74% of probate court judges and 71% of district court judges). For those judges who indicated the period was not typical, they primarily cited either time off for vacation/illness or a fluctuation in workload as explanations for how the timeframe was not representative. NCSC’s methodology accounts for vacation absence by replacing any missing time with the average daily work reported during the time study. Similarly, during the normal course of a month, it is typical to see work ebb and flow across court locations, for example, some courts will have long jury trials, while others will have none. So, the fact that work fluctuated during this timeframe is to be expected.

Similarly, judges were asked whether they were able to record all the time they worked. Just over two thirds of judges (71% of circuit court judges, 70% of probate court judges, and 74% of district court judges) indicated they were able to track all their work. Those who were not able to do so indicated small amounts of time that was not reported, such as brief conversations with staff and coworkers, signing orders, and recording time when multi-tasking.⁵

⁵ Judges were asked to either pick one activity when multi-tasking, or to break the two activities into equal amounts of time. For example, if a judge was signing orders for 30 minutes while also presiding over a jury

trial, the judge was asked to either attribute the full 30 minutes to signing orders, or to split the time as 15 minutes of signing orders and 15 minutes in a jury trial.

Judges were also asked to respond to a series of questions regarding their ability to get work done during work hours and their levels of stress associated with their work. Each question was rated on five-point a Likert scale, from “almost never” (1), to “almost always” (5). An average score of 3.0 or above generally indicates that respondents can manage the issues addressed. Figure 6 provides the average scores for both circuit and district courts. For circuit and probate court judges, only the question “I have time to take lunch and breaks throughout the day” scored 2.90; for district court judges, the two questions related to stress are the only two items that scored below 3.0. Specifically, the item “I feel stressed about deadlines or commitments” scored 2.90 and “I feel stressed or overwhelmed by the amount of work I have to complete” scored 2.88.

Figure 6: Adequacy of Time Survey Average Composite Scores

Question:	Circuit/Probate Court Judges' Average Score	District Court Judges' Average Score
I have sufficient time on a regular basis to get my work done.	3.27	3.99
I am able to accomplish what needs to be done during the workday.	3.15	3.97
When I start a task, I typically have the time to complete the task.	3.01	3.54
I have the tools and resources to do my job efficiently and effectively.	3.46	3.74
The reliability and speed of the internet connections are sufficient.	4.17	4.25
I have enough time to adequately assist court users and ensure they understand what is expected of them.	3.54	3.97
I have enough time at work to keep up with legal changes that affect my role.	3.17	3.71
I can meet deadlines without rushing at the last minute.	3.30	3.87
I have time to take lunch and breaks throughout the day.	2.90	3.34
I can take vacation/sick days if/when they are needed.	3.69	3.94
I feel stressed about deadlines or commitments.	3.35	2.90
I feel stressed or overwhelmed by the amount of work I have to complete.	3.36	2.88
The pace at which I work is sustainable.	3.29	3.79

Finally, judges were asked to identify up to five obstacles that prevent them from being as successful as possible in their jobs. As shown in Figure 7, circuit and district court judges identified not having enough judges, court staff, and attorneys, and the heavy volume of cases and workload as the two top obstacles. Detailed comments also indicate concern about the ability to retain staff as well, citing low wages as a concern. Constant interruptions was also included in the top five obstacles for both court types, ranking fourth in the circuit court and third in the district court. Circuit court judges include the lack of time and assisting self-represented litigants in their top five obstacles. District court judges include outdated or poor

facilities and lack of funding in their top five obstacles.

Figure 7: Top Five Obstacles Identified by Circuit and District Court Judges

Obstacle:	% of Circuit /Probate Court Judges
Not enough judges/court staff/attorneys	54%
Heavy volume of cases and workload	47%
Lack of time	37%
Constant interruptions	35%
Assisting self-represented litigants	28%

Obstacle:	% of District Court Judges
Heavy volume of cases and workload	42%
Not enough judges/court staff/attorneys	39%
Constant interruptions	35%
Outdated or poor facilities	26%
Lack of funding	25%

B. Quality Adjustment Panels

The JRAC reviewed the preliminary case weights on January 22, 2025, and recommended that several case weights be reviewed for potential adjustment by quality adjustment panels. NCSC project staff facilitated a series of quality adjustment sessions with panels of circuit, probate, and district court judges in February 2025. Separate quality adjustment sessions were held with problem-solving court judges in March 2025. The four panels comprised a total of 37 experienced judges from a representative variety of courts across the state. Each panel focused on a subset of case types:

Circuit court case types reviewed included:

- Auto negligence
- Medical malpractice

- Other civil
- Business court
- Adoptions
- Other family
- Appeals and other

Probate court case types reviewed included:

- Supervised and unsupervised estates
- Small estates
- Trusts
- Conservatorships/Protection orders
- Adult guardianships
- Minor guardianships
- Judicial admissions/mental health commitments
- Other probate
- General civil

District court case types reviewed included:

- Non-traffic civil infractions
- Landlord-tenant/land contract

Problem-solving court types reviewed included:

- Circuit juvenile mental health court,
- District adult drug court,
- District adult sobriety court,
- District veterans court,
- District adult mental health court.

At the beginning of each quality adjustment session, NCSC staff provided group members with an overview of the process used to develop preliminary case weights, followed by a review of the focus group findings, adequacy of time survey results, and the 2024 case weights to be reviewed alongside the previous case weights from the 2019 time study.

Using a variant on the Delphi method—a structured, iterative process for decision-making by a panel of experts—each group engaged in a systematic review of the preliminary case

weights. Group members drew on current practice (as measured by the time study), the perspective of judges from across the state (as expressed in the adequacy of time survey and focus groups), and their personal experience to make recommendations regarding the content of the final case weights. Each group was asked to follow a three-step process:

1. Identify specific case types and activities where additional time to account for case processing changes that occurred between the two study periods and/or additional time that would allow for more effective case processing,
2. Within each case type, recommend adjustments, or not, to the time allotted to specific case-related functions, and
3. Provide an explicit rationale to support any proposed increase or reduction in judicial time.

The recommended adjustments were reviewed with the JRAC at their final in-person meeting, held on March 17, 2025. The process also ensured that the statewide perspective gained from the adequacy of time survey and focus groups, along with the input of all group members, was incorporated into the final workload model. The panels made the following recommendations that were then reviewed by the JRAC.

Circuit Court

Auto Negligence: The panel recommended adding 45 minutes to 50% of auto negligence cases to account for the possibility of time not being accurately captured during the data collection period and the data collection period not being reflective of the time spent on these

cases. Judges reported that there were fewer hearings than usual, and more cases settled during the time study period. This adjustment resulted in an overall increase to the case weights from 96 to 119 minutes.

Medical Malpractice: No change. The panel believed the time was representative of medical malpractice cases, especially given settlement caps implemented since the last time study, resulting in more cases settling outside of trial. The panel also agreed that early facilitation, which is also new since the last time study, decreases case processing time. The case weight remains at 511 minutes.

Other Civil: The review panel recommend adding 30 minutes to 25% of other civil cases to allow for more time to review judgments and settlement agreements to ensure consistency. This adjustment resulted in an increase in the case weights from 147 to 156 minutes.

Business Court: The panel recommend adding 60 minutes to 50% of business court cases to allow time for writing opinions and reviewing motions for summary judgments. Currently, judges ask staff (where available) to do this work, or judges provide opinions on the court record because there is not enough time to write the opinions. This adjustment resulted in a case weight increase from 236 to 266 minutes.

Adoption: The review panel recommend adding 30 minutes to 25% of adoption cases to allow for a more thorough review of case files. The panel also recommended adding 60 minutes to 10% of cases to allow time for judges to assess whether reasonable efforts were made in neglect cases and whether guardians are providing enough

opportunity for visitation to grant rights. The combined adjustments increased the case weight from 50 to 64 minutes.

Other Family: The panel recommended adding 15 minutes to 75% of other family cases to allow more time to explain orders and rulings to self-represented litigants and to more thoroughly review the background check in name change cases. They also recommend adding 25 minutes to 40% of cases to account for the time required to adhere to the new confidentiality rules in name change cases. These adjustments increase in the case weight from 24 to 43 minutes.

Appeals and Other: The panel recommended adding 60 minutes to 50% of appeals and other cases to allow additional time for research, review, and reading briefs and transcripts. This adjustment resulted in an increase in the case weight from 93 to 122 minutes.

Probate Court

Supervised and Unsupervised Estates: The panel recommended adding 960 minutes to .05% of the cases since the data collection period did not include any trial time for supervised estates. While trials are rare, they do occur, and the data collection period did not capture time for trials. This adjustment resulted in an increase in the case weight from 20 to 21 minutes.

Small Estates: No change.

Trusts: No change.

Conservatorships and Protective Orders: No change.

Adult Guardianships: No change.

Minor Guardianships: No change.

Judicial Admissions and Mental Commitments: The panel recommended adding 30 minutes to 50% of the cases to allow more time for ensuring compliance, conducting review hearings before orders expire, and for more judicial leadership and problem-solving in these cases. This adjustment resulted in an increase in the case weight from 16 to 31 minutes.

Other Probate: No change.

General Civil: No change.

District Court

Non-traffic civil infractions: This case type was originally computed with the inclusion of parking cases along with other civil infractions and had a case weight of 1.1 minutes that was adjusted to 1.6 minutes. After further analysis, the SCAO found that several courts had highly disproportionate numbers of parking tickets that biased the judicial needs model, resulting in inaccurate estimates. As a result, SCAO requested that NCSC remove the parking tickets from the total cases filed and recompute the case weight. The new case weight for non-traffic civil infractions is 7 minutes.

Landlord Tenant and Land Contracts: No change. Due to the new rules and additional hearings for these cases, the group felt that the time was representative of a landlord tenant/land contract case.

Problem-Solving Courts

When discussing the review panels' recommendations on problem-solving courts, the JRAC questioned why the case weights across different court types were so different. For example, there should be virtually no time differences between adult problem-solving courts regardless of whether the courts exist within the circuit or district courts. The JRAC agreed that there should be time differences between adult- and juvenile-focused problem-solving court programs. Furthermore, all SCAO-certified problem-solving courts maintain the same standards, so the case weights should be consistent.

Based on these discussions, the JRAC agreed to create a single weight for adult circuit and district drug, sobriety, veterans, and mental health courts; the combined weight for all courts is 460 minutes. Similarly, the JRAC combined the time associated with the circuit juvenile drug courts and mental health courts into one case weight of 497 minutes. The JRAC conceded that the circuit family dependency treatment court and the swift and sure sanctions courts are different and should retain their original case weights of 1,057 and 100 minutes, respectively.

The preliminary and final case weights for all three courts are presented in Figure 8, below. The quality adjusted weights are shown in bolded font and underlined.

The last judicial time study in Michigan was conducted in 2018. Since then, trial court operations have undergone a period of unprecedented change. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted a rapid and widespread shift toward

remote court operations, most notably the adoption of platforms like Zoom. While remote proceedings have increased court accessibility — leading to reductions in failures to appear and default judgments — they have also introduced new logistical demands. Research and court feedback consistently show that remote hearings often require more judicial time than in-person hearings due to technical coordination, participant troubleshooting, and procedural adaptations.

The 2024 time study reflects a notable shift in judicial workload across case types. Several lower-volume categories in circuit and probate courts (e.g., appeals, estate, and probate civil cases) have shown decreased case weights, suggesting improved efficiency or changing case characteristics. However, many higher-volume case types — including OWI felonies, non-divorce domestic matters, small claims, misdemeanors, and juvenile delinquency — have shown significant increases in judicial time per case.

Several factors are likely to contribute to these increases:

- Expanded access to the courts via remote proceedings may have led to more engaged litigants, resulting in more contested hearings and longer case durations.
- Recent reforms to indigent defense in Michigan may have increased the quality and assertiveness of defense representation, particularly in criminal and juvenile cases.
- Staffing shortages in many trial courts have required judges to absorb administrative or procedural tasks once handled by support staff.

- Increased case complexity, as reported anecdotally by judges and court staff, may require more judicial research, deliberation, and hearing time.
- Expansion of problem-solving courts (e.g., drug, mental health, and veterans' courts), which are resource-intensive but have demonstrated superior outcomes in reducing recidivism and improving compliance.

While overall court filings declined during the height of the pandemic (2020–2022), they have largely rebounded. By 2024, total filings were only about 4% lower than in 2018. However, the distribution of cases has shifted. The district

court has seen significant reductions in small claims, traffic, and misdemeanor filings. In contrast, circuit and probate courts have been largely insulated from these declines, and in many jurisdictions, filings in these courts have increased.

In short, even as gross filings have stabilized, the time demand per case has grown — particularly in high-impact, high-volume dockets. This trend, coupled with structural and operational shifts in how courts deliver justice, supports the need for revised and increased judicial case weights in many areas.

Figure 8: Preliminary and Quality-Adjusted Case Weights

Circuit Court	Preliminary Case Weight (minutes)	Final Case Weight (minutes)
Capital Felony and Felony Juvenile	930	930
Noncapital Felony	122	122
Auto Negligence	96	<u>119</u>
Medical Malpractice	511	511
Other Civil	147	<u>156</u>
Business Court	236	<u>266</u>
Divorce without Children	54	54
Divorce with Children	188	188
Non-Divorce Domestic	48	48
PPO/ERPO	32	32
Adoption	50	<u>64</u>
Other Family	24	<u>43</u>
Juvenile Delinquency and Designated	71	71
Child Protective Proceedings	258	258
Appeals and Other	93	<u>122</u>
<hr/>		
Circuit Adult Drug Court	477	<u>460</u>
Circuit Sobriety Court	181	<u>460</u>
Circuit Juvenile Drug Court	464	<u>497</u>
Circuit Family Dependency Treatment Court	1,020	1,020
Circuit Veterans Treatment Court	589	<u>460</u>
Circuit Adult Mental Health Court	661	<u>460</u>
Circuit Juvenile Mental Health Court	121	<u>497</u>
Circuit Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program	100	100

	Preliminary Case Weight (minutes)	Final Case Weight (minutes)
District Court		
Felony	52	52
Misdemeanor	42	42
Non-Traffic Civil Infractions	7	7
Traffic Misdemeanor	8	8
Traffic Civil Infractions	1	1
OWI Misdemeanor	57	57
OWI Felony	41	41
General Civil	10	10
Small Claims	8	8
Landlord-Tenant/Land Contract	14	14
District Adult Drug Court	740	460
District Sobriety Court	365	460
District Veterans Treatment Court	609	460
District Adult Mental Health Court	376	460

	Preliminary Case Weight (minutes)	Final Case Weight (minutes)
Probate Court		
Supervised and Unsupervised Estates	20	21
Small Estates	5	5
Trusts	239	239
Conservatorships and Protective Orders	86	86
Adult Guardianships	78	78
Minor Guardianships	104	104
Judicial Admissions and Mental Commitments	16	31
Other Probate	49	49
General Civil	259	259

V. DAY VALUES AND ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENTS

The case weights represent the average amount of time judicial officers spend processing cases. In addition to this work, judicial officers also perform work that is not related to an individual case before the court, such as administrative work, public outreach, and general legal research and reading. The weighted caseload

model incorporates this non-case-related work in two ways: through *judge year value* and a set of *administrative adjustments* for judges with additional administrative responsibilities.

A. Judge Year Value

The judge year value is equal to the amount of time each full-time judge has available for case-related work in one year, after subtracting non-case-related responsibilities. To develop the year values for Michigan trial court judges, it was necessary to determine the number of days each judge generally has available for case-related work in each year (judge year), as well as how to divide the workday between case-related and non-case-related work (judge day value).

1. Judge Year

The judge year represents the number of days in the working year on which a judge can engage in case-related work. Accounting for weekends, holidays, vacation days, standard training days, and sick time, JRAC established a judge year of 214 days available for case-related work. This value is based on the judge year adopted in previous versions of Michigan’s judicial officer weighted caseload model, but it includes an additional holiday recently added for Juneteenth. Figure 9 shows the calculation of the year value.

Figure 9: Judge Year Value

Judge Year	Days
Total Days per Year	365
<i>Subtract Non-Working Days:</i>	
Weekends	-104
Holidays	-13
Paid Time Off	-24
Training and Conferences	-10
Total Available Workdays per Year	214

2. Judge Day

The judge day value represents the amount of time each judge has available for case-related work each day. This value is calculated by subtracting time for lunch, breaks, and non-case-related work (e.g., administration, travel, judicial education) from the total working day. Based upon the time study data, and consistent with the previous time study, JRAC adopted a day value for judges in single-county jurisdictions of 6.0 hours, a day value of 5.75 hours multi-county jurisdictions to accommodate additional travel and 1.5 hours per day for non-case-specific work in both single and multi-county jurisdictions.

3. Judge Year Value

To calculate the final year values for case-related work, the number of days in the working year was multiplied by the day value for case-related work. This figure was then expressed in terms of minutes per year. Figure 10 shows the calculation of the year value, in minutes, for judges in single-county and multi-county courts. The year value for single-county courts is 77,040 minutes and for multi-county courts the year value is 73,830 minutes.

Figure 10: Year Values for Singl- and Multi-County Courts Expressed in Minutes

Single-county courts

214 days x 6.0 hours x 60 minutes = 77,040 minutes

Multi-county courts

214 days x 5.75 hours x 60 minutes = 73,830 minutes

B. Administrative Adjustments

The time study data revealed that administrative responsibilities create additional non-case-related work for chief judges and problem-solving court judges that is not fully reflected in the judge day and year values, which consider only the ordinary administrative work performed by all judges. Additionally, the data collection period was not reflective of the time chief probate judges may spend doing election commission work. To incorporate this additional non-case-related administrative work into the weighted caseload model, JRAC determined that an administrative adjustment for chief judge administrative work, election commission work, and problem-solving court administrative work should be added. A credit of .04 FTE for each judge in each court was given to the courts that are county funded and .03 FTE per judge for the 3rd class funded courts to account for the chief judge administrative work and the election work. For example, if a county funded court has three judges, the total adjustment for that court is .12 FTE. Likewise, if a 3rd class funded court has five judges, the total adjustment for that court is .15 FTE. Figure 11 show an example of how this adjustment was calculated for the different types of courts.

Figure 11: Example Chief Judge Adjustment, by Court and Number of Judges

Funding Unit	Court	Number of Judges		Chief Judge FTE Adjustment	=	Total FTE Adjustment per Court
County	Court A	3	x	0.04	=	0.12
County	Court B	10	x	0.04	=	0.40
County	Court C	27	x	0.04	=	1.08
3rd Class	Court D	1	x	0.03	=	0.03
3rd Class	Court E	5	x	0.03	=	0.15

To account for problem-solving court administrative time, an adjustment of .04 per problem-solving court was given to the court locations in which the problem-solving courts are located. In locations where there are multiple problem-solving courts, the adjustment was applied for each one. Figure 12 shows an example of problem-solving court adjustment.

Figure 12: Example Problem-Solving Court Adjustment, by County and Number of Courts

County	Number of Problem-Solving Courts		Problem-Solving Court FTE Adjustment	=	Total FTE Adjustment per Court
County A	3	x	0.04	=	0.12
County B	1	x	0.04	=	0.04
County C	4	x	0.04	=	0.16

The adjustment for out-of-county mental health work was based on the time collected during the time study in counties where it occurs and varies by court based on the time spent.

In certain counties with mental health facilities, probate judges may conduct hearings on assignment relating to judicial admissions and mental commitment cases originating outside of their county. To account for this, time relating to these out-county cases was captured directly during the time study and used to estimate an

administrative adjustment for each court where these hearings are common. The adjustment is individualized to the county based on the amount of time that was reported in this category during the time study.

The administrative adjustments for chief and presiding judges, problem-solving court judges, election commission work, and out-of-county mental health casework were designed to be added to judicial need in the appropriate courts before the selection of courts for secondary analysis.

VI. APPLYING THE WEIGHTED CASELOAD MODEL

To calculate total judge need in each court, the final case weights are multiplied by the court's annual average case filings. Administrative adjustments are added to the judge need. The total judge need calculation is divided by the judicial year, providing an estimate for the number of judges needed to handle the workload.

SCAO then compares the workload-based judicial officer need with current judicial resources, conducts in-depth secondary analyses, and ultimately makes recommendations to the Michigan legislature on judicial need.

A. Calculating Total Judge Need

In the weighted caseload model, four factors contribute to the calculation of judicial need: caseload data (new filings), case weights, the year value, and applicable administrative adjustments. The year value is equal to the amount of time each full-time judge has available for case-related work on an annual basis. The relationship among the filings, case weights, and year value is expressed as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Filings x Case Weights (minutes)}}{\text{Year Value (minutes)}} = \text{Resource Need (FTE)}$$

Multiplying the filings for each court by the corresponding case weights results in the total annual workload for each court in minutes. Dividing the workload by the year value yields the total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) judicial officers (judges and QJOs combined) needed to handle the workload.

Figure 13 shows the calculation of total judicial officer workload in a hypothetical 3rd class district court. The average annual filings for each case type are multiplied by the corresponding case weight to calculate the judicial workload

associated with each case type.⁶ The workload is summed across all case types, then divided by the year value for single-county courts. The model shows a need of 5.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) judicial officers to handle the workload. Any applicable administrative adjustments should be added at this point given the individual characteristics of the court. As originally adopted by JRAC, the administrative adjustment for the chief judge is 0.3 FTE per judge for the 3rd class district courts. Assuming the court has a total of five judges, the chief judge adjustment is .15 FTE. Assuming the county has four problem-solving courts, the JRAC adopted adjustment of .04 FTE per problem-solving court would result in a total problem-solving court adjustment of 0.16 FTE. Both adjustments are then added to yield a total judicial officer need of 6.01 FTE (5.7 + administrative adjustments of 0.31 = 6.01).

Figure 13: Calculating Total Judicial Officer Need (example)

Case Type	Annual Filings Average	x	Final Case Weight (minutes)	=	Workload (minutes)
Felony	846	x	52	=	43,992
Misdemeanor	3,786	x	42	=	159,012
Non-Traffic Civil Infractions	2,991	x	7	=	20,937
Traffic Misdemeanor	1,506	x	8	=	12,048
Traffic Civil Infractions	16,604	x	1	=	16,604
OWI Misdemeanor	329	x	57	=	18,753
OWI Felony	46	x	41	=	1,886
General Civil	6,051	x	10	=	60,510
Small Claims	1,048	x	8	=	8,384
Landlord-Tenant/Land Contract	860	x	14	=	12,040
District Adult Drug Court	47	x	<u>460</u>	=	21,620
District Sobriety Court	68	x	<u>460</u>	=	31,280
District Veterans Treatment Court	29	x	<u>460</u>	=	13,340
District Adult Mental Health Court	41	x	<u>460</u>	=	18,860
				Total Workload (minutes)	= 439,266
				Judge Year Value (minutes) ÷	77,040
				Judicial Officer Need (full-time equivalent)	= 5.70
				Chief Judge Adjustment	= 0.15
				Problem-Solving Court Adjustment	= 0.16
				Total Judicial Officer Need (full-time equivalent)	= 6.01

B. Secondary Analysis

In preparing the Judicial Resources Recommendation report, SCAO calculates judicial need in each court based on the computed workload, then compares existing judicial resources with that need. Courts where judge need deviates by at least one judge (plus or minus) are automatically selected for secondary analysis. Those courts that are selected for secondary analysis are notified. SCAO also allows any court to opt-in to secondary analysis independent of these calculations. If a court has not been notified that they have been selected for secondary analysis

⁶ To minimize the influence of short-term fluctuations in caseloads on calculations of judicial need, a three-year simple moving average of filings is used.

but would like to have the analysis conducted they can request it.

During the secondary analysis, SCAO considers court-specific and qualitative factors that may affect the need for judges, such as trends in population and caseloads, atypical requirements for travel among courts, specialty dockets that do not meet the definition of a problem-solving court, and local prosecutorial practices. Following the secondary analysis, SCAO makes its final recommendations for the creation of new judicial positions and reductions in

judgeships in the Judicial Resources Recommendations report.

Although certain judicial functions can only be performed by a judge, a portion of a court's judicial need can be satisfied by referees, magistrates, or probate registers. These staff resources are provided by the county or local funding unit. The weights for these positions will be presented in the court operations report.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The NCSC encourages the Court to consider the following recommendations regarding the ongoing use of the weighted caseload model.

Recommendation 1

The NCSC recommends updating the trial court judicial needs assessment model annually by inserting new case filings from the average of the most recent three years of reliable filings.

Recommendation 2

The NCSC recommends that SCAO continue to utilize the secondary analysis to further assess the need for judges.

Recommendation 3

Over time, the integrity of any weighted caseload model may be affected by external factors such as changes in legislation, case law, legal practice, court technology, and administrative policies. NCSC recommends that the Court conduct a comprehensive review of the weighted caseload model every five to seven years. This review should include a time study in which all or most trial court judges participate. Between updates, if a major change in the law appears to have a significant impact on workload, the NCSC recommends that the SCAO employ a process like the quality adjustment sessions used in this study to make interim adjustments to the affected case weight(s).

APPENDIX A: JUDICIAL OFFICER CASE TYPE CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS

Circuit Court Case Types
Capital Felony and Felony Juvenile
<p>Capital Felonies [FC]. Capital felony cases in which life sentence is possible and a larger number of peremptory jury challenges is provided.</p> <p>Juvenile Felonies [FJ]. Juvenile offenses committed by juveniles and waived to the criminal division of the circuit court under MCR 3.950. Includes life offenses committed by juveniles in which the prosecuting attorney has authorized the filing of a criminal complaint and warrant under MCR 6.907 instead of proceeding in the family division of the circuit court.</p>
Noncapital Felony
<p>Non-Capital Felonies [FH].</p> <p>Extradition/Detainer [AX]. All extradition and detainer matters initiated by Michigan to other states.</p>
Auto Negligence
<p>Property Damage, Auto Negligence [ND]. All complaints of property damage, but not personal injury, involving the use of a motor vehicle.</p> <p>No-Fault Automobile Insurance [NF]. All claims for first-party personal protection benefits and first-party property protection benefits under the no-fault automobile insurance act.</p> <p>Personal Injury, Auto Negligence [NI]. All complaints of personal injury, or personal injury and property damage, involving the use of a motor vehicle.</p>
Medical Malpractice
<p>Medical Malpractice [NH]. All claims involving health-care provider malpractice.</p>
Other Civil
<p>Condemnation [CC]. All condemnation proceedings.</p> <p>Employment Discrimination [CD]. All complaints of employment discrimination.</p> <p>Environment [CE]. All environmental matters such as zoning, pollution, etc.</p> <p>Forfeiture Claims [CF]. All claims of interest in property seized under the Controlled Substance that may be subject to forfeiture.</p> <p>Housing and Real Estate [CH]. All housing, real estate, foreclosure, land contracts, and other property proceedings (except landlord-tenant and land contract summary proceedings).</p> <p>Contracts [CK]. All proceedings involving contractual obligations not otherwise coded.</p> <p>Labor Relations [CL]. All labor-management matters except employment discrimination.</p> <p>Antitrust, Franchising, and Trade Regulation [CP]. All complaints regarding unlawful trade practices including but not limited to pricing and advertising of consumer items, regulation of watercraft, restraint of trade and monopolies, Consumer Protection Act, Farm and Utility Equipment Franchise Act, franchise investment law, motor vehicle dealer agreements, and the Motor Fuel Distribution Act.</p> <p>Corporate Receivership [CR]. All corporate receivership proceedings.</p> <p>General Civil [CZ]. All other civil actions not otherwise coded.</p> <p>Other Professional Malpractice [NM]. All claims involving professional malpractice other than health-care provider malpractice.</p> <p>Other Personal Injury [NO]. All other claims involving liability for personal injury not otherwise coded.</p> <p>Products Liability [NP]. All claims involving products liability.</p> <p>Liquor Control [NS]. All claims involving liability under the liquor control code.</p> <p>Other Damage Suits [NZ]. All other claims for damages.</p> <p>Proceedings to Restore, Establish, or Correct Records [PC]. All proceedings to restore, establish, or correct records that are assigned a new case number (not brought under an existing case).</p> <p>Claim and Delivery [PD]. All complaints to recover personal property that are assigned a new case number (not brought under an existing case).</p> <p>Receivers in Supplemental Proceedings [PR]. All proceedings appointing a receiver that are assigned a new case number (not brought under an existing case).</p> <p>Supplemental Proceedings [PS]. All supplemental proceedings that are assigned a new case number (not brought under an existing case).</p> <p>grand jury, and applications for restoration of firearms rights under MCL 28.424.</p>
Business Court
<p>Business Claims [CB]. All claims in which all or part of the action includes a business or commercial dispute under MCL 600.8035.</p>
Divorce without Children
<p>Divorce, No Children [DO]. All complaints for divorce, separate maintenance, or annulment when no minor children are involved. Also used for intrastate transfers of post-judgment divorce complaints when no minor children are involved.</p>
Divorce with Children
<p>Divorce, Minor Children [DM]. All complaints for divorce, separate maintenance, or annulment when minor children are involved. Also used for intrastate transfers of post-judgment divorce; divorce and custody; or divorce, custody, and support complaints when minor children are involved.</p>

Circuit Court Case Type (continued)

Non-Divorce Domestic

Custody [DC]. All habeas corpus to obtain custody of a child; order to show cause for custody of a child; other custody, or custody and support proceedings when no divorce action has been filed; or actions under the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Enforcement Act. Also used for intrastate transfers of post-judgment custody or custody and support proceedings where no divorce action has been filed.

Paternity [DP]. All questions of paternity; paternity and custody; or paternity, custody, and support. Also used for intrastate transfers of post-judgment paternity; paternity and custody; or paternity, custody, and support complaints.

Other Support [DS]. All child support or child support and custody matters under the Family Support Act, and expedited support actions under the Summary Support and Paternity Act. Also used for intrastate transfers of post-judgment child support matters under those Acts.

Other Domestic Relations Matters [DZ]. All other prejudgment matters involving domestic relations proceedings not otherwise coded. Also used for intrastate transfers of other post-judgment matters involving domestic relations proceedings not otherwise coded.

Assist with Discovery [UD]. All proceedings to assist with discovery or to compel a response to a discovery order issued by another state's tribunal.

UIFSA Establishment [UE]. All support and paternity establishment proceedings incoming from another state.

UIFSA Filing [UF]. All outgoing requests to another state or country initiating enforcement, modification, income withholding, or redirection of support orders not issued in this state.

UIFSA Initiation [UI]. All support and paternity establishment proceedings outgoing to another state.

UIFSA Registration of Orders for Modification [UM]. All incoming registrations of another state's orders for the specific purpose of modification.

UIFSA Registration of Orders for Enforcement [UN]. All incoming registrations of another state's orders for the specific purpose of enforcement.

PPO/ERPO

Extreme Risk Protection Orders, Ex Parte, Minor Respondent [EE]. All extreme risk protection order proceedings under MCL 691.1805 where respondent is under the age of 18 and an ex parte order is requested at case initiation.

Extreme Risk Protection Orders, Non Ex Parte, Minor Respondent [EJ]. All extreme risk protection order proceedings under MCL 691.1805 where respondent is under the age of 18 and an ex parte order is not requested at case initiation.

Extreme Risk Protection Orders, Ex Parte, Adult Respondent [EP]. All extreme risk protection order proceedings under MCL 691.1805 where respondent is over the age of 18 and an ex parte order is requested at case initiation.

Extreme Risk Protection Orders, Non Ex Parte, Adult Respondent [ER]. All extreme risk protection order proceedings under MCL 691.1805 where respondent is over the age of 18 and an ex parte order is not requested at case initiation. 6 Michigan Supreme Court, State Court Administrative Office Michigan Trial Court Records Management Standards – Case Type Codes (MCR 8.117) (rev. 1/24).

Extreme Risk Protection Orders, Emergency Request, Adult Respondent [EV]. All extreme risk protection order proceedings under MCL 691.1805 where respondent is over the age of 18 and an immediate emergency order is requested by a law enforcement officer pursuant to MCL 691.1807(4).

Extreme Risk Protection Orders, Emergency Request, Minor Respondent [EZ]. All extreme risk protection order proceedings under MCL 691.1805 where respondent is under the age of 18 and an immediate emergency order is requested by a law enforcement officer pursuant to MCL 691.1807(4).

Personal Protection Against Stalking [PH]. All personal protection proceedings under MCL 600.2950a when there is no domestic relationship between the parties and the respondent is not under the age of 18.

Personal Protection Actions Brought Under the Juvenile Code [PJ]. All petitions seeking a personal protection order against a respondent under the age of 18. Includes proceedings conducted for violation of personal protection orders issued under the juvenile code when heard by a county other than the county that issued the personal protection order.

Personal Protection in Domestic Relationships [PP]. All personal protection proceedings under MCL 600.2950 and/or MCL 600.2950a when there is a domestic relationship between the parties and the respondent is not under the age of 18.

Violation Proceedings on Out-of-County Personal Protection Order - Revised Judicature Act [VP]. All proceedings conducted for violation of personal protection orders issued under MCL 600.2950 or MCL 600.2950a when heard by a county other than the county that issued the personal protection order. This case is filed as "In the Matter of."

Adoption

Direct Placement Adoptions [AD]. All direct placement adoptions including temporary placements prior to filing of petition for direct placement.

Relative Adoptions [AF]. All adoptions by relatives including relative guardians, but not including stepparent adoptions.

Safe Delivery of Newborn Adoptions [AG]. All adoptions resulting from safe delivery of newborn proceedings.

Permanent Ward Adoptions (state ward or court ward) [AM]. All state or court ward adoptions resulting from child protective proceedings.

Nonrelative Adoptions [AN]. All adoptions by guardians who are not relatives.

Agency Other Adoptions [AO]. All other private or public agency adoptions not otherwise designated.

Adoption Miscellaneous [AU]. Releases for adoption (including those executed out-of-court), ex parte petitions to issue notice of intent to release for adoption, and notices of intent to claim paternity.

Stepparent Adoptions [AY]. All adoptions by stepparents.

Circuit Court Case Type (continued)

Other Family

Emancipation of Minor [EM]. All emancipation proceedings initiated under the Status of Minors and Emancipation Act.

Infectious Disease [ID]. All proceedings under the public health code for treatment of infectious disease or testing for infectious disease.

Safe Delivery of Newborn Child [NB]. All proceedings involving a newborn child surrendered under MCL 712.1 et seq.

Name Change [NC]. All name change proceedings.

Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act [VF]. All petitions filed under MCL 400.655.

Juvenile Guardianship [JG]. All juvenile guardianships created by order under the juvenile code, MCL 712A.19a and MCL 712A.19c.

Juvenile Delinquency and Designated

Designated Juvenile Offenses [DJ]. All juvenile offenses designated by the prosecutor or court to be heard in the family division of circuit court in the same manner as an adult criminal case is heard in the criminal division of the circuit court.

Delinquency Proceedings [DL]. All delinquency proceedings initiated by petition under the juvenile code or initiated by Uniform Law Citation for various minor offenses not in the Motor Vehicle Code.

Traffic and Local Ordinance [TL]. All traffic and local ordinance issued on a Uniform Law Citation under the Motor Vehicle Code or local corresponding ordinance.

Child Protective Proceedings – Circuit

Child Protective Proceedings [NA]. All child protective proceedings initiated by petition under the juvenile code.

Appeals and Other

Agencies [AA]. All matters from administrative agencies other than the Michigan Employment Security Commission and the Michigan Secretary of State. Includes appeal of any county clerk action taken under MCL 28.421 et seq.

Employment Security Commission [AE]. All matters regarding Michigan Employment Security Commission actions.

Parole Board Decisions [AP]. Appeals in parole board decisions.

Criminal Appeals [AR]. All criminal appeals from a lower court when filed in a higher court.

Civil Appeals [AV]. All civil appeals from a lower court when filed in a higher court.

Habeas Corpus [AH]. All writs of habeas corpus governed by MCR 3.303 and MCR 3.304 except habeas corpus to obtain custody of a child.

Licensing and Vehicles [AL]. All matters regarding Secretary of State actions.

Superintending Control [AS]. All matters involving superintending control or supervisory control powers of the court.

Writs [AW]. All actions for mandamus not filed in the Court of Claims and all quo warranto and other writs.

District Court Case Types

Felony

Felony Criminal [FY]. All felony nontraffic cases. Includes life offenses committed by juveniles in which the prosecuting attorney has authorized the filing of a criminal complaint and warrant under MCR 6.907 instead of proceeding in the family division of the circuit court, and specified offenses committed by juveniles and waived to the criminal division of the circuit court under MCR 3.950.

Felony Traffic [FT]. All felony traffic cases except drunk driving.

Extradition/Detainer [EX]. All extradition and detainer matters initiated by Michigan to other states.

Misdemeanor

Ordinance Misdemeanor Criminal [OM]. All nontraffic misdemeanor offenses issued under ordinance.

Statute Misdemeanor Criminal [SM]. All nontraffic misdemeanor offenses issued under statute.

Non-Traffic Civil Infractions

Ordinance Civil Infraction Nontraffic [ON]. All nontraffic civil infraction offenses issued under ordinance.

Statute Civil Infraction Nontraffic [SN]. All nontraffic civil infraction offenses issued under statute.

Traffic Misdemeanor

Ordinance Misdemeanor Traffic [OT]. All traffic misdemeanor offenses issued under ordinance except drunk driving.

Statute Misdemeanor Traffic [ST]. All traffic misdemeanor offenses issued under statute except drunk driving.

Traffic Civil Infraction

Ordinance Civil Infraction Traffic [OI]. All traffic civil infraction offenses issued under ordinance.

Statute Civil Infraction Traffic [SI]. All traffic civil infraction offenses issued under statute.

OWI Misdemeanor

Ordinance Misdemeanor Drunk Driving [OD]. All drunk-driving misdemeanor offenses issued under ordinance.

Statute Misdemeanor Drunk Driving [SD]. All drunk-driving misdemeanor offenses issued under statute.

OWI Felony

Felony Drunk Driving [FD]. All felony drunk-driving cases.

General Civil

General Civil [GC]. All civil cases for money damages except small claims, landlord-tenant, and land contract.

Miscellaneous Civil [GZ]. All nonmonetary claims including coroner’s inquests, claim and delivery without money judgment, drug forfeitures, other summary proceedings not relating to landlord-tenant and land contract, and proceedings under the public health code for testing for infectious disease.

Small Claims

Small Claims [SC]. All civil claims for the recovery of money that does not exceed the jurisdictional limit in MCL 600.8401.

Landlord-Tenant/Land Contract – District

Landlord-Tenant Summary Proceedings [LT].

Land Contract Summary Proceedings [SP].

Probate Court Case Types

Supervised and Unsupervised Estates

Decedent Estates, Supervised Administration [DA]. All matters involving decedent estates in which administration is supervised.

Decedent Estates, Unsupervised Administration and Non-administered Estates [DE]. All matters involving decedent estates in which either administration is unsupervised, or the estate is not administered.

Small Estates

Small Estates [PE]. All assignments of estates where gross estate assets do not exceed \$15,000 (as adjusted for inflation).

Trusts

Trust, Testamentary [TT]. All trusts that take effect on the death of the settlor.

Trust Inter Vivos [TV]. All trusts which are operative during the lifetime of the settlor.

Conservatorships and Protective Orders

Adult Conservatorship [CA]. All matters involving conservatorship of adults.

Minor Conservatorship [CY]. All matters involving conservatorship of minors.

Protective Orders [PO]. All protective orders requested under the estates and protected individuals code except when filed in conjunction with a petition for conservatorship. All petitions filed under MCL 333.5682 regarding POST forms except when filed in conjunction with a petition for guardianship.

Adult Guardianships

Developmental Disability Guardianship [DD]. All matters involving guardianship of individuals with developmental disability, both adults and minors.

Adult Guardianship [GA]. All matters involving full guardianship of incapacitated individuals.

Limited Guardianship of Adult [GL]. All matters involving limited guardianship of incapacitated individuals

Minor Guardianships

Minor Guardianship [GM]. All matters involving full guardianship of minors.

Limited Guardianship of Minor [LG]. All matters involving limited guardianship of minors.

Judicial Admissions and Mental Commitments

Judicial Admission [JA]. All matters involving judicial admission of individuals with developmental disability.

Mental Illness Proceedings [MI]. All mental illness and substance use disorder proceedings brought under the mental health code.

Other Probate

Delayed Registration of Birth [BR]. All petitions and orders on denial of application for delayed registration of birth pursuant to MCL 333.2828 and petitions and orders for delayed registration of foreign birth pursuant to MCL 333.2830.

Miscellaneous Matters [ML]. All other matters filed with the probate court for judicial or administrative action including but not limited to: appeal of land owner on an assessment made by the county road commissioner or state highway commissioner under Chapter 247; appeal of a determination made by the department of treasury under the Michigan Estate Tax Act; appeal by an adoptee, the adoptee's guardian, or the adoptive parent or parents of a determination made by the department of health and human services under the Social Welfare Act; appeal of a determination made by the drain commission under the Drain Code of 1956; appeal of a redetermination of ability to pay for mental health services made under the mental health code; condemnation proceedings; death by accident or disaster; filing of letters by foreign personal representative; kidney transplants; lost instruments; opening of safe deposit box; support of poor persons; and uniform transfers/gifts to minors acts.

Determination of Heirs (separate proceeding) [DH]. All matters to determine heirs as a separate proceeding.

Problem-Solving Court Case Types

Problem-solving court criteria:

The program meets the SCAO-certified, evidence-based problem-solving court program,

The program has an enabling statute, and

The program submits data through DCCIMS to SCAO

Circuit Adult Drug Court

Circuit Sobriety Court

Circuit Juvenile Drug Court

Circuit Family Dependency Treatment Court

Circuit Veterans Treatment Court

Circuit Adult Mental Health Court

Circuit Juvenile Mental Health Court

Circuit Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program

District Adult Drug Court

District Sobriety Court

District Veterans Treatment Court

District Adult Mental Health Court

APPENDIX B: JUDICIAL OFFICER CASE-RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. Pre-Disposition/Non-Trial Disposition

Includes all on-bench and off-bench activity related to pretrial proceedings and non-trial dispositions. Probate cases include uncontested proceedings to appoint a fiduciary or to order supervision of a trust. Consists of all off-bench research and preparation related to pre-disposition and non-trial disposition activities.

Specific Task Examples (Not Exhaustive)

Arrestment	Entry of guilty plea and sentencing
Pretrial motion that does not fully dispose of the case (e.g., motion in limine)	Pre-adjudication review of screening and assessment tools (e.g. YASI, GAINS, etc.)
Proceeding to appoint a temporary fiduciary	Informal traffic hearing
Scheduling conference	Motion for summary judgment
Issuance of warrants and writs	Hearing on appointment of permanent fiduciary
On-call/after-hours review and issuance of warrants	Uncontested disposition hearing
Review of pre-trial/adjudication referee recommendations	Quality Legal Representation grant – when preventing removals
Pre-adjudication juvenile delinquency review	Any other pre-disposition/non-trial disposition hearing

2. Trial

Includes all on-bench and off-bench activity related to a bench or jury trial or another contested proceeding that disposes of the original petition in the case. In probate cases, this includes contested proceedings to appoint a fiduciary or to order supervision of a trust. Consists of all off-bench research and preparation related to trials. This category also provides sentencing following a bench or jury trial.

Specific Task Examples (Not Exhaustive)

Bench trials	Juvenile adjudicatory trials
Jury trials	Contested disposition hearing
Sentencing after conviction at trials	Adoption trials and finalization hearings
	Post-adjudication review of screening and assessment tools (e.g. YASI, GAINS, etc.)
Trial on the appointment of a permanent fiduciary	
Contested divorce, custody, and paternity trials	

3. Post-Disposition

Includes all on-bench and off-bench activity after the entry of judgment on the original petition in the case. Probate cases include all activity after a fiduciary is appointed or trust supervision is ordered. Consists of all off-bench research and preparation related to post-disposition activity.

Specific Task Examples (Not Exhaustive)

Post-trial motion	Motion for installment judgment
Sentencing after revocation of probation and other activity related to probation cases	Permanency planning hearing
Probation review hearing	Dispositional review hearing
Probation violation hearing	Post-termination review hearing
Guardianship review	Termination of parental rights
Guardianship modification/termination proceedings	Post-adjudication juvenile delinquency review
Account allowances (probate)	Appellate work
Motion for change of custody, support, parenting time, or domicile	
Child support enforcement	Any other post-disposition hearings

Case-Related Activities, continued

4. Case-Specific Certified Problem-Solving Court Time

Includes time spent on case-specific problem-solving court activities.

Specific Task Examples (Not Exhaustive)

Review sessions	Discussing individual cases with providers
Staffing sessions (review meetings)	Problem-solving court hearings
Correspondence	

5. Specialized Docket Work

Includes time spent when performing non-judicial tasks typically performed by a Friend of the Court, such as enforcing court orders.

6. Friend of the Court Work [REFEREES]

Includes time spent when performing non-judicial tasks typically performed by a Friend of the Court, such as enforcing court orders.

7. Case-Related Clerical Work

Referees or magistrates – includes time spent when performing non-judicial work that is typically done by a court clerk.

8. Probation Officer Work

Referees or magistrates – includes time spent when performing non-judicial work that is typically done by a probation officer.

APPENDIX C: JUDICIAL OFFICER NON-CASE-RELATED ACTIVITIES

a. Non-Case Related Administration

Includes all non-case-related administrative work.

Specific Task Examples (Not Exhaustive)

- Coordinating with law enforcement
- Personnel matters
- Staff supervision and mentoring

b. Chief Judge/ Chief Judge Pro Tem / Presiding Judge

Judicial administrative time.

c. Judicial Education and Training

Includes time spent on all educational and training activities.

Specific Task Examples (Not Exhaustive):

- Judicial education
- Conferences
- On-line courses
- Teaching judicial education courses, including preparation

d. General Legal Reading

Includes all legal reading and research unrelated to a specific case before the court.

Specific Task Examples (Not Exhaustive)

- Reading journals
- Reading professional newsletters
- Reviewing summaries of appellate court decisions

e. Community Activities and Public Outreach

Includes all community and outreach activities performed in your official capacity as a judge. Does not include election-related activities, personal or non-judicial community service work (e.g., serving on a hospital board of directors or the local board of education), or activities for which you are compensated by an outside source (e.g., performing marriages outside of court hours, teaching law school courses).

Specific Task Examples (Not Exhaustive)

- Speaking at schools about the legal system or law-related careers
- Judging law school mock trials
- Writing journal articles
- Weddings

Non-Case-Related Activities, continued

f. On-Call/After-Hours Review and Issuance of Warrants

Select this activity when the case type is unknown or not filed.

g. Staff meetings, union meetings, committee meetings, and related work

h. Employee wellness activities during paid-work hours

i. Non-Case-Related Problem-Solving Court Activities

Includes all non-case-related problem-solving court activities.

Specific Task Examples (Not Exhaustive)

General administration (grants, monitoring the quality-of-service providers)

Attending policy meetings and other PSC-related meetings

Attending or providing PSC training

Reading and reviewing research, program reports, and evaluations

PSC-related community outreach

j. Travel

Includes all case-related and non-case-related travel to work in a location other than the courthouse in which your chambers are located. Does not include your regular commute from your home to your usual workplace.

k. Vacation/Sick Leave/Personal Day

Includes any leave time taken.

l. Time Study Tracking and Data Entry

Includes all time spent filling out time study forms and entering time study data using the web-based form.