



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: [Teresa Ruano](mailto:Teresa.Ruano@courts.ca.gov), 415-865-7740

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 17, 2013

Court Filings Decrease for Fiscal Year 2011–2012

Decrease linked to budget cuts; most complex case types on the rise

SAN FRANCISCO—Statewide court filings in the California superior courts decreased in fiscal year 2011–2012 but remain unchanged over a 10-year period, according to the Judicial Council’s 2013 [Court Statistics Report \(CSR\)](#). The 8.5 million case filings represent a 9.8 percent decrease from the previous year. Most of the decline occurred in limited jurisdiction cases—misdemeanors and infractions in the criminal case category and small claims and limited civil (less than \$25,000) in the civil case category. At the same time, felony filings have increased slightly, and filings in mental health cases increased by 11 percent, which represents a growing caseload for those case types over the last 10 years.

“The *Court Statistics Report* is a useful reference document that provides an annual snapshot of statewide filings data and indicates multi-year trends. The raw data raises questions that require more in-depth analysis before drawing any conclusions,” said Justice Doug Miller, Chair of the Judicial Council’s Executive and Planning Committee. “Although we’re uncertain about the conclusions, council members and our justice system partners are certain about how budget cuts have affected the public and have impacted access to justice—including reduced hours and closed courtrooms, fewer law enforcement officers on the street, and the reallocation of resources to focus on certain case types or services.”

The *CSR* provides detailed statewide caseload data for fiscal year 2011–2012 and 10-year trend data on a wide range of court business in the Supreme Court of California, the Courts of Appeal, and the superior courts in the state’s 58 counties. Comprehensive county-level data for the most recent fiscal year are published in the online version of the report, along with a summary of the major filings trends, on the [California Courts website](#).

Article VI, section 6 of the California Constitution requires the Judicial Council to survey the condition of business in the state courts and to report and make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature.

A snapshot of the court caseload data in the *CSR* for fiscal year 2011–2012 follows.

Supreme Court*

- The Supreme Court issued 87 written opinions in fiscal year 2011–2012.
- Filings totaled 9,237, and dispositions totaled 9,739.

- Automatic appeals arising out of judgments of death totaled 18 cases, and the court disposed of 29 such appeals by written opinion.
- The Supreme Court ordered 1 Court of Appeal opinion depublished in this fiscal year.

Courts of Appeal

- Total contested matters for the Courts of Appeal totaled 21,894, made up of 13,498 records of appeal and 8,396 original proceedings.
- Dispositions in the Courts of Appeal totaled 24,215. Of these dispositions, 15,531 were notices of appeals, and 8,684 were original proceedings.
- Dispositions of appeals by written opinion totaled 10,097, appeals disposed of without written opinion totaled 3,485, and appeals disposed of without a record filed totaled 1,949. Dispositions of original proceedings by written opinion totaled 572, and original proceedings disposed of without written opinion totaled 8,112.
- Statewide, 8 percent of Court of Appeal majority opinions were published.

Superior Courts

Superior court case filings across all case categories totaled 8,498,331. A total of 10,006 jury trials and 467,649 court trials were recorded across all case types. The following filings totals were recorded by case type:

- Civil
 - Unlimited (greater than \$25,000) – 196,994
 - Limited (less than \$25,000) – 603,097
 - Small claims – 183,957
- Criminal
 - Felony – 243,270
 - Misdemeanor – 1,047,594
 - Infraction – 5,607,727
- Family and Juvenile
 - Marital – 160,593
 - Other family law – 277,207
 - Delinquency – 62,937
 - Dependency – 39,040
- Other case types:
 - Civil and criminal appeals – 5,008
 - Criminal habeas corpus – 8,483
 - Mental Health – 19,643
 - Probate – 42,781

** Since 1996, the California Supreme Court has issued additional workload statistics using a reporting period of September 1 through August 31 of the following year. This time frame best corresponds to the filing of the Supreme Court's opinions. View the court's September 1, 2011–August 31, 2012 [annual statistics](#).*

###

The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.