

48th Circuit Court

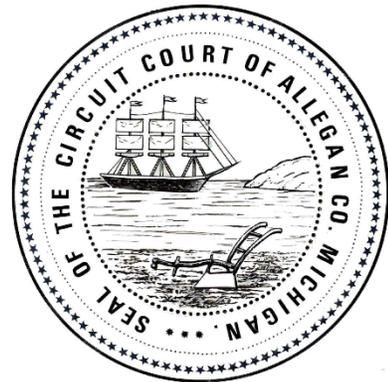
2022 Annual Report

Thursday, June 8, 2023

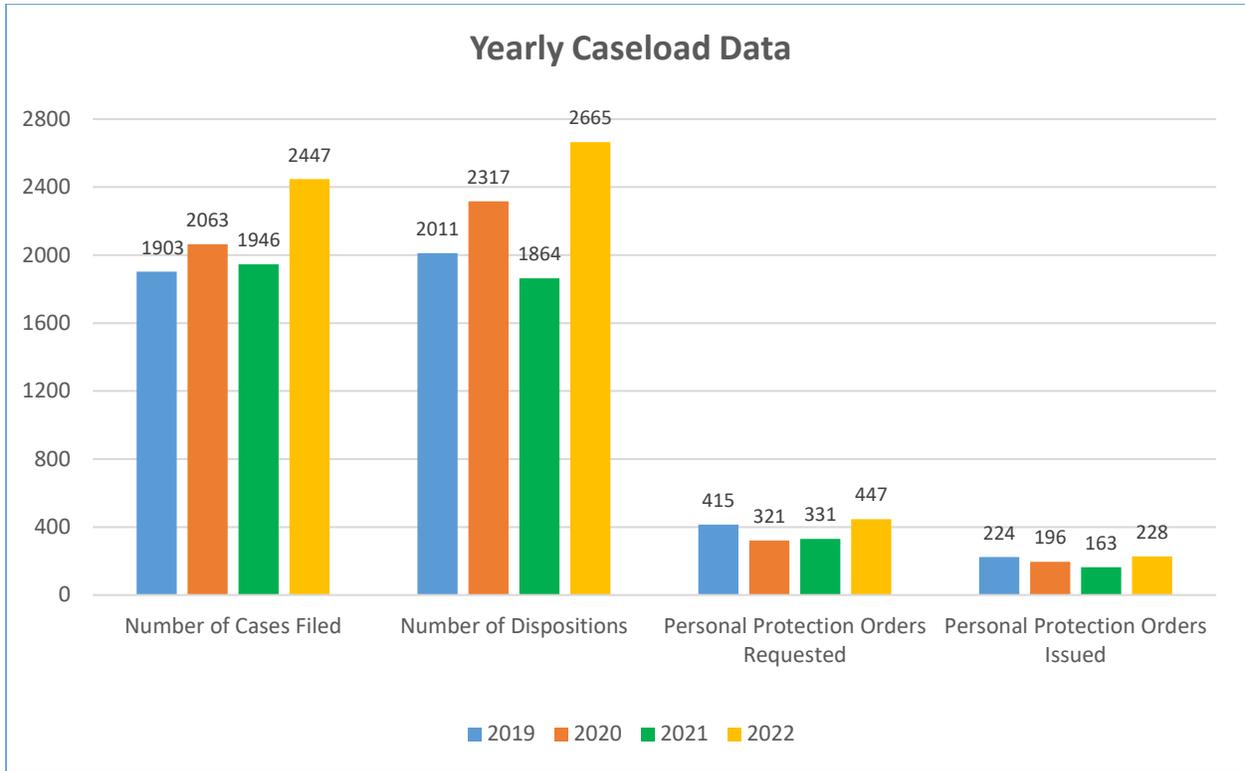
Criminal and Civil,

Friend of the Court,

Family Division



Circuit Court Statistics

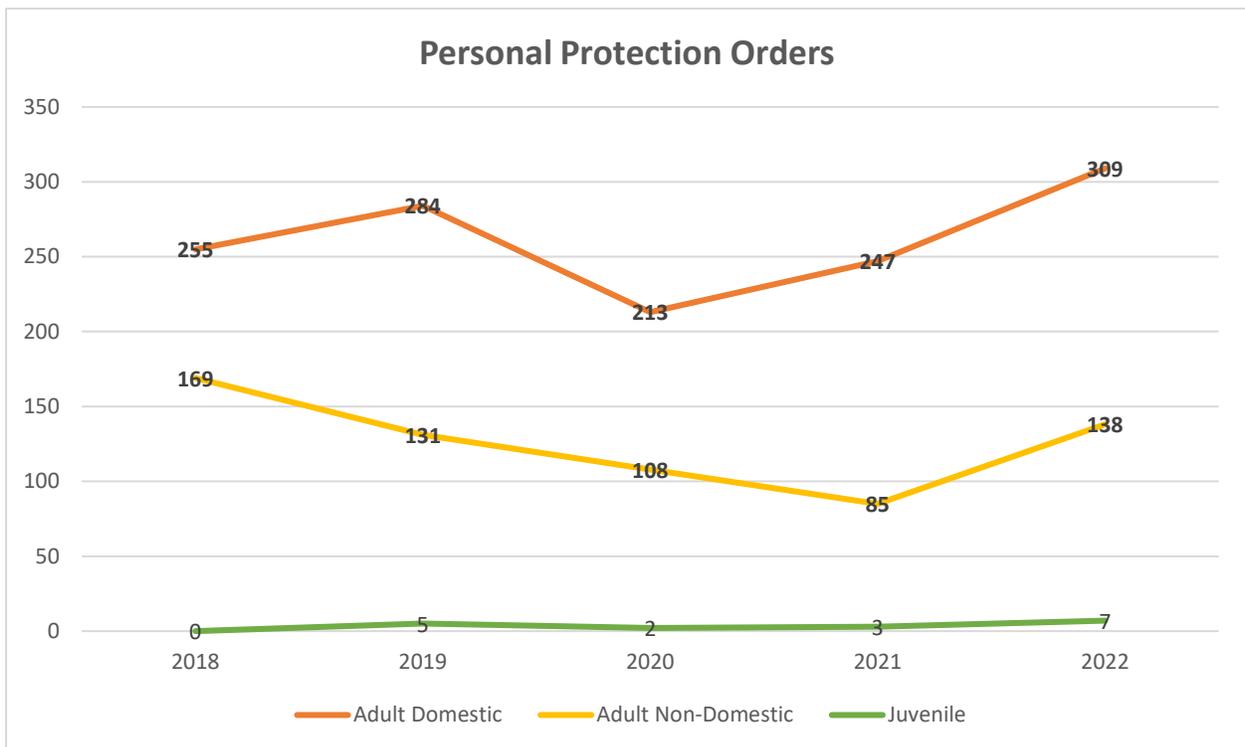
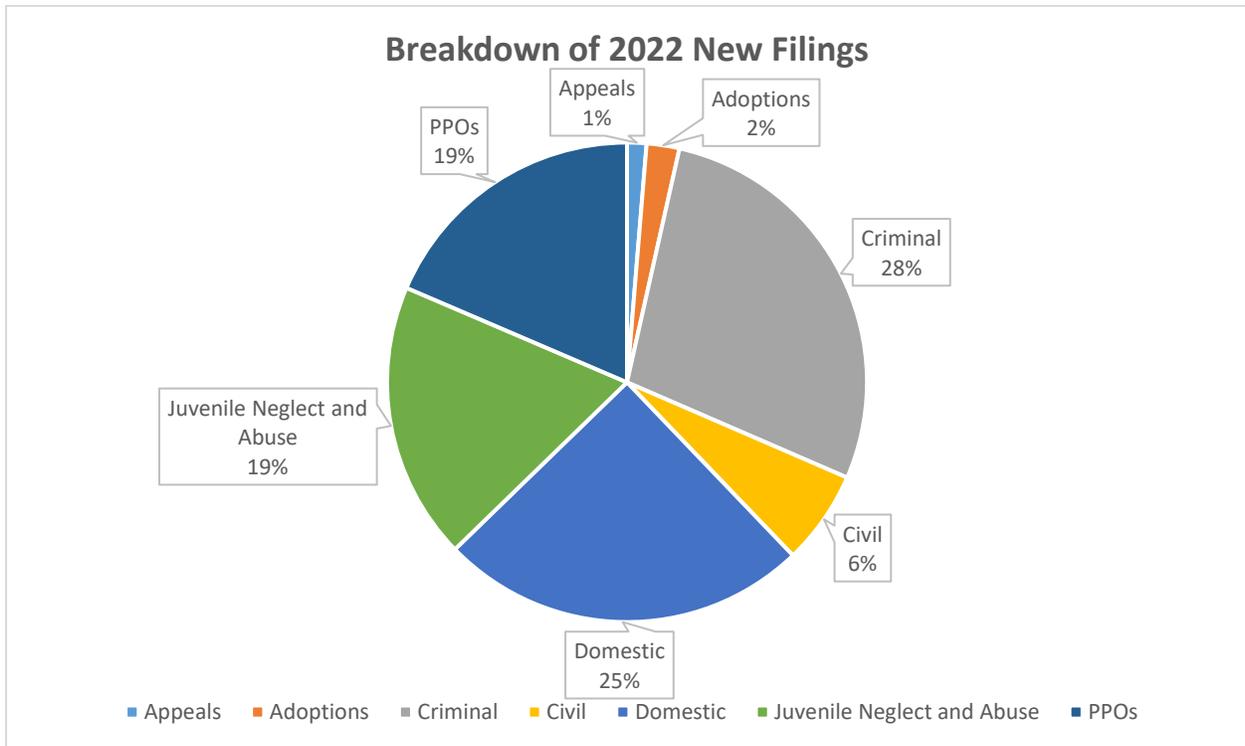


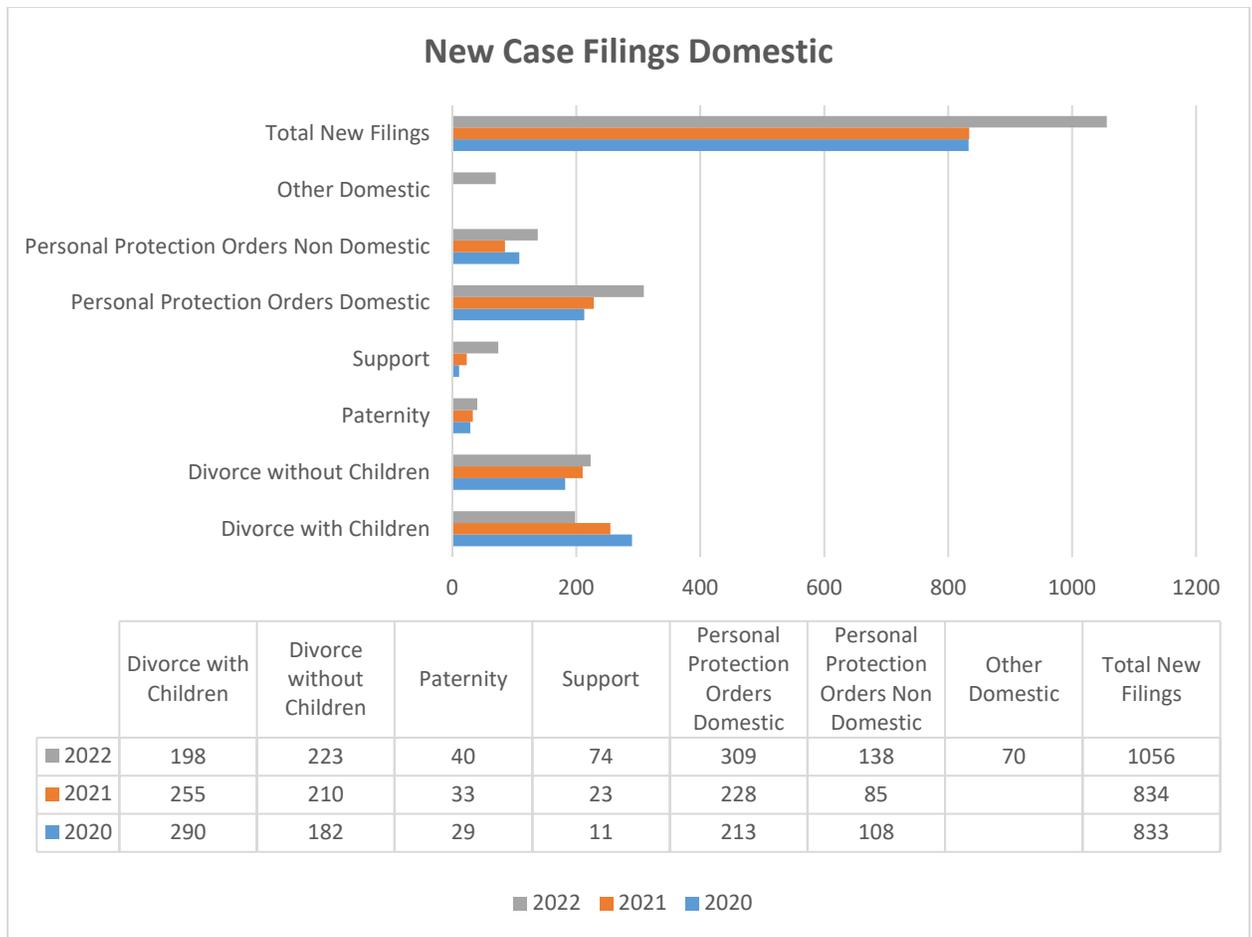
Circuit Court continues to see a high number of case filings and dispositions, with 2022 being another record high year.

Zoom remained a vital tool for the courts in 2022, and we saw permanent changes to the Michigan Court Rules relating to the use of remote proceedings, demonstrating that this technology is here to stay.

Following disruptions caused by COVID, we reported a backlog of 118 jury trials in 2020. In March of 2022, Circuit Court had a backlog of 79 trials. In March of 2023, this number was 82 despite Circuit Court conducting 26 jury trials in 2022. We continued to abide by social distancing recommendations throughout the year. Jurors continue to be polled after each trial, and all continue to report complete satisfaction with the strategies implemented by the courts. Circuit Court was happy to switch over to an automated jury system in September of 2022, and we continue to work through multiple challenges associated with the change.

In 2022, 2,447 cases were filed in Circuit Court, which includes all case types. 685 of these cases were felony cases, which is a slight reduction from the prior year.





2022 was another busy year for domestic cases as well, with numbers staying fairly consistent over the past 3 years. 2022 showed an interesting change in types of cases filed relating to children, with a decrease in divorce cases and an increase in support cases, presumably relating to the increase in children born out of wedlock.

Statistics relating to the domestic docket can be deceiving. Unlike other case types, the court dedicates significant amounts of time to these cases in years following the filing date, in some cases, the court remains involved with the family for over 18 years. For example, the court remains responsible to hear requests for changes to custody, parenting time, and child support. To put this into perspective, the Friend of the Court typically has around 5,000 open cases at any given time.

Circuit Court Jury Trials

In 2020, the court identified a need for a change in our jury service process. Our system was antiquated and very time-consuming, which made tedious work for both court and clerk staff alike. Historically, in Allegan County, the courts used what is referred to as a 2-step process. Annually, the Secretary of State sends the court about 4,000 names and address taken from driver's licenses and state identification records. Of those 4,000 names about 2,000 were mailed qualification questionnaires each fall for the following jury calendar year which runs from September – August annually. Questionnaires were then returned by mail to the Clerk's office and reviewed by the Jury Board for qualification. The qualified questionnaires were then collected and used to identify those eligible to be summoned. Each month 400 summonses were then mailed out, directing jurors to report for a two-week panel. Instructions were left to call each night of the two-week service to see if you needed to report. This process was slow and confusing. Jurors would receive questionnaires and misunderstand the process, thinking they would need to serve for the whole year. By the time they then received a summons, the reporting process was confusing and people would often forget to call and report.

The court decided to move to a one-step process. This meant sending qualification questionnaires with the summons at the same time. The court also decided to take ownership of the qualification process rather than this step be completed by the jury board. The court also now checks jurors in and out, rather than this being done by the Clerk's office. The court started collecting juror emails for reminder notifications and better communication. While we saw an increase in qualified jurors, attendance on reporting days was still an issue as was the mailing and tracking of juror summons and questionnaires.

In 2021, the capital project list included a new Jury Management System for both District and Circuit Court. However, the contract was not finalized with the county until September of 2021, which put the courts on a start date of December 16, 2021. The system took nine months to install, but the courts were able to "go-live" for the start of the new jury pool year in September of 2022. It was a very time-consuming process with frustrating training and implementation timelines for both Circuit and District Court Administration teams. Since installation of the new system, jury pools are selected electronically within the software and then summonses are printed and mailed off-site. Jurors have the option to fill the questionnaire out on-line or mail the response back. Jurors are required to provide an email address and/or a text capable phone number for communication with the courts. Reminder emails are sent a week before the summons begins. Additionally, a text and email are sent the night before if a juror is summoned to appear the next morning.

Managing jurors and their needs is still a full-time job for a Circuit Court employee, but our attendance rates are near 100% for reporting days. Prior to COVID, the courts averaged about 12 trials per year. In 2022, we had 26 jury trials, 11 of which occurred between the beginning of September and mid-December. This rate continued into 2023, with another 11 trials in January, February and March. This is a 400% increase in trials.

Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program (SSSPP)

The Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program received its biggest grant award for FY23 (\$123,000). There have been six graduations since the last reporting period. We currently have 11 participants in the program. The program continues to test participants for illegal substances and alcohol. We continue to try to grow the program, providing services to those with substance abuse and alcohol issues. The program assists participants by helping them find employment and housing – statistically proven elements for leading a successful sober lifestyle.

The program has monthly meetings to ensure the program resources are being used efficiently. The monthly meetings also allow staff to ensure the budget is on track as well as discuss any participants that require more specialized services.

The program participants learn how to live a healthy drug-free life. For some, securing stable housing and eliminating negative people in their lives was their biggest victory while in the program. I would like to thank the Swift and Sure team as well as the court and county leadership for their support of specialty courts and programs. Specialty courts continue to be a cost-efficient, yet effective alternative to jail and or prison.

Specialty Court Coordinator
Aaron Arredondo

Allegan County

Friend of the Court (FOC)

The FOC Office was fully functional in 2022, following two years of restrictions due to COVID. In-person meetings and hearings were available for many court users. FOC staff continues to use technology, such as electronic signing of documents, telephone meetings, two-way communication through the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System (MiCSES), and remote hearings conducted using the Zoom platform, to provide robust services to parents with a FOC case. Many court users appreciate the availability of these alternate means of doing business with the FOC Office.

A new FOC director began work at the end of January 2022. There was no other turnover of FOC staff during 2022.

As of May 2023, 11 staff members have completed mediation training which is a 48-hour course. This training has been very beneficial for staff and the community.

Progress Towards 2022 Goals

At the beginning of 2022, several goals were established. The goals and progress made towards those goals are discussed in this section.

Grow the ACT program

The Specialized Enforcement Officer will continue to build partnerships with community partners. The Friend of the Court is looking for funding opportunities to provide financial support for this program.

Progress: The FOC has established a referral process with OnPoint to provide case management services for individuals that have child support orders and have substance use disorders, mental health disorders, and/or lack housing. This will permit the FOC to accept more cases into the Court's ACT program. In addition, the FOC has been able to secure some resources for parents with support obligations, through a new program that is funded by the Office of Child Support and Michigan Works. Resources may include vehicle repairs, securing identification documents and/or drivers licenses, resume writing, job search and career training, technology packages, etc.

Regular review of reports to improve performance of incentive factors

The FOC earns incentive monies for certain performance factors. Currently, the FOC is not earning the maximum incentive amount because the FOC is not meeting some minimum performance measures. The FOC will start reviewing designated reports on a regular basis to ensure that data that is being reported for performance criteria calculations is accurate.

Progress: Several data reports are now reviewed on a regular basis. The FOC exceeds the state average in all areas in which the FOC can earn incentive monies. In addition, the Allegan FOC improved its performance from 2021 to 2022 in four of the five incentive factors. These monies help fund FOC activities. (See the performance reports on pages 11-15, comparing 2021 performance to 2022 performance).

Employee manuals

FOC staff work with a multitude of statutes, court rules, policies, forms, and software programs. Employees in different functional areas will begin the process of writing desk aids for various job responsibilities. These written desk aids will be used when training new employees and when staff need to cover job responsibilities for an absent staff member.

Progress: Manuals have been established for enforcement of orders and front-line staff. These will always be a work in progress as laws and policies change. These manuals serve as a reference for current employees, and a training resource for new employees in the FOC Office.

Friend of the Court Bureau (FOCB) recommendations

The FOC will continue to review and prioritize recommendations the FOCB made in its 2019 Technical Improvement Report for the FOC.

Progress: The FOC implemented six recommendations that were made by the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) during 2022.

Adopt and implement a makeup parenting time policy

Implementing this policy should provide parents with a quicker resolution of disputes surrounding denied parenting time and should also provide FOC staff with a more efficient process for addressing parenting time complaints.

Progress: A makeup parenting time policy was implemented in March 2022.

Implement processes to abate and redirect support

Michigan statutes provide for an administrative process to abate and redirect child support in certain circumstances, e.g., payer is incarcerated or incapacitated, child resides with the payer of support, child resides with a non-parent. Providing notice and an opportunity to object to parents is authorized by statute and is a faster and more efficient process than established practices.

Progress: A process to administratively abate and/or redirect support, as allowed by statute, was implemented in June 2022.

Performance Statistics

The FOC distributed a total amount of support of \$13,000,553.76 in 2022. Seventy-four percent, 74%, of support was distributed in the month it was ordered.

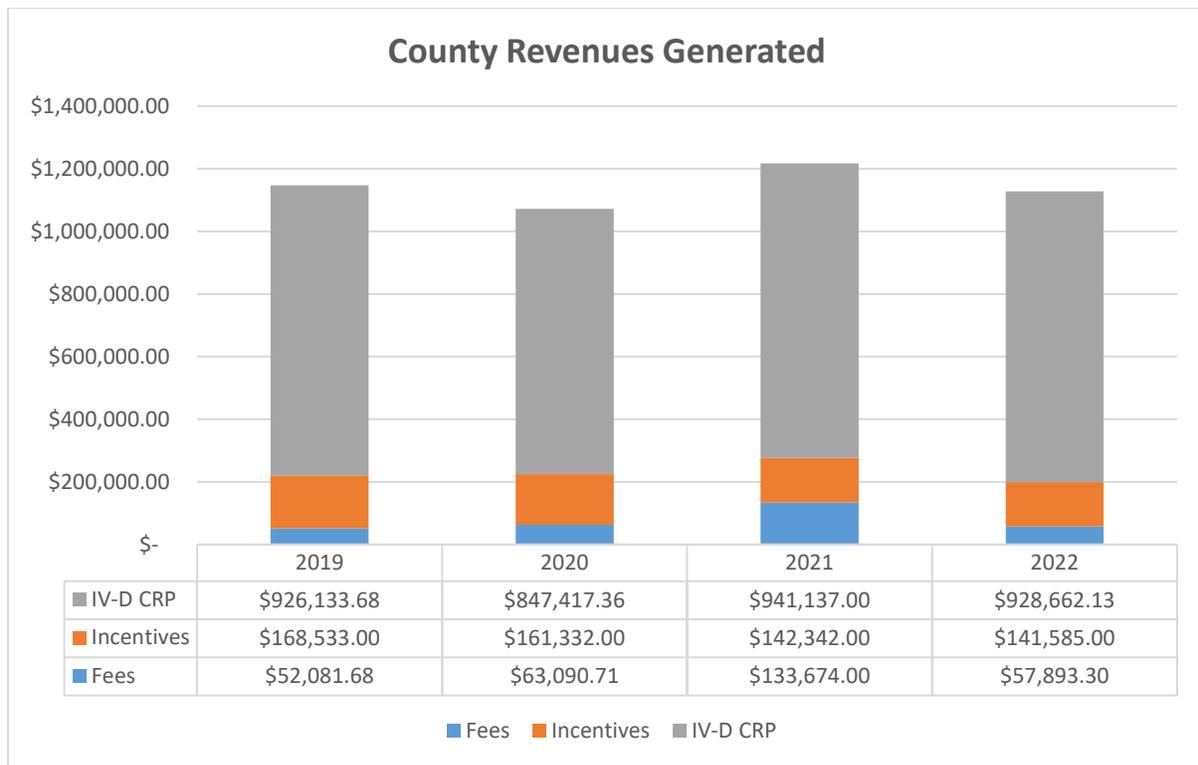
Through a cooperative agreement between the Court and the Sheriff a Sheriff's Deputy was hired and dedicated to enforcing bench warrants issued for failure to pay child support. In 2022, this Deputy made 62 arrests. In addition to the arrests, the Deputy assisted in resolving other bench warrants without an arrest. The FOC Office collected \$5,105.00 in bench warrant

fees which, in addition to reimbursement from the Cooperative Reimbursement Program Contract, help fund this position.

FOC Facilitators resolved 66% of custody issues outside of the courtroom through facilitative gathering information conferences.

FOC Enforcement Officers have an average of 1,141 court cases each. They are responsible for monitoring support payments and initiating enforcement of the Court’s custody, parenting time, and support orders. In 2021, the Enforcement Officers initiated 1,100 contempt hearings, issued 200 custody and parenting time notices and 350 bench warrants. These activities were in addition to monitoring and responding to case alerts, meeting with parents to help resolve disputes, making referrals for mediation services, and calculating support and drafting consent orders for parents.

In addition, FOC staff conducted child support reviews in 711 cases. FOC staff sent out 3,325 National Medical Support Notices, 300 more than in 2021.

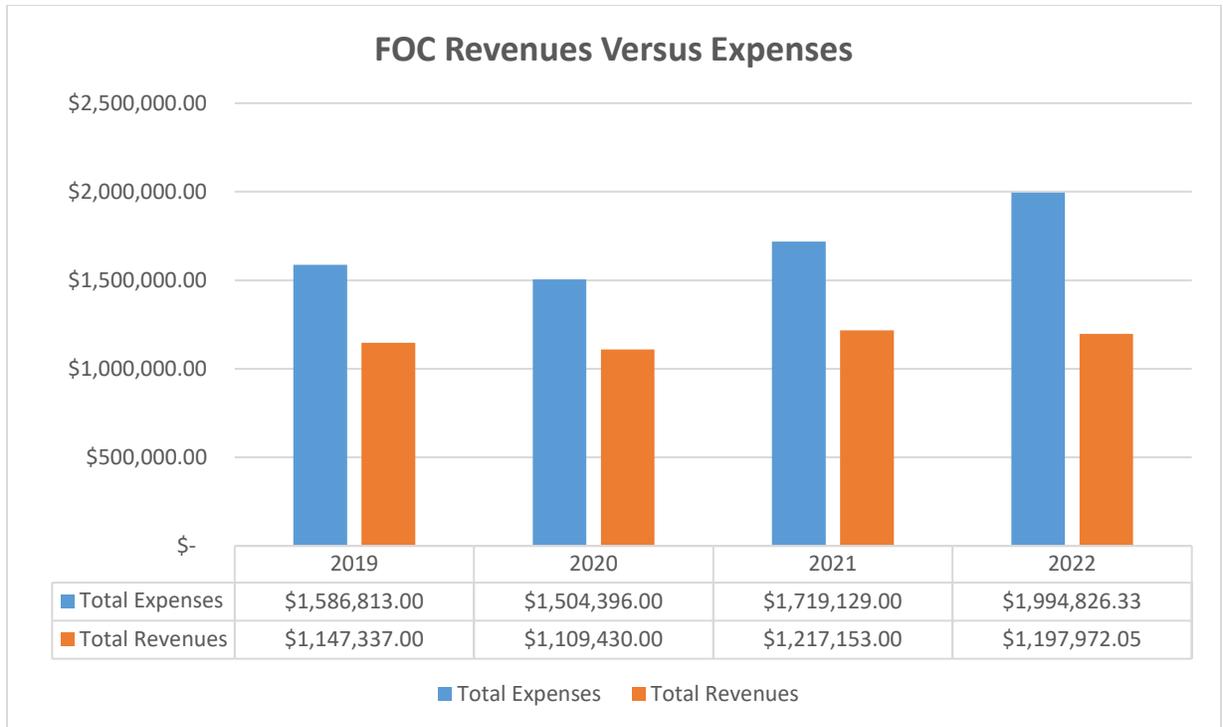


Revenues

1. IV-D CRP reflects the revenue for IV-D services. It is the total amount of reimbursement received under the Cooperative Reimbursement Program (CRP) contract. The CRP is a federal payment allocated to the county general fund. This amount is directly related to the number of expenditures by the FOC Office.

2. Incentive reflects the performance-based federal payment allocated to the county general fund. It is the total amount of incentives received pursuant to the federal IV-D program. 42 USC 658A 45 CFR 305.35.

3. Fee reflects the statutory collections allocated to the county general fund. It is the total amount of semi-annual service fees, which is \$2.25 received by the county treasurer and not the service fees collected and sent to the state treasurer.



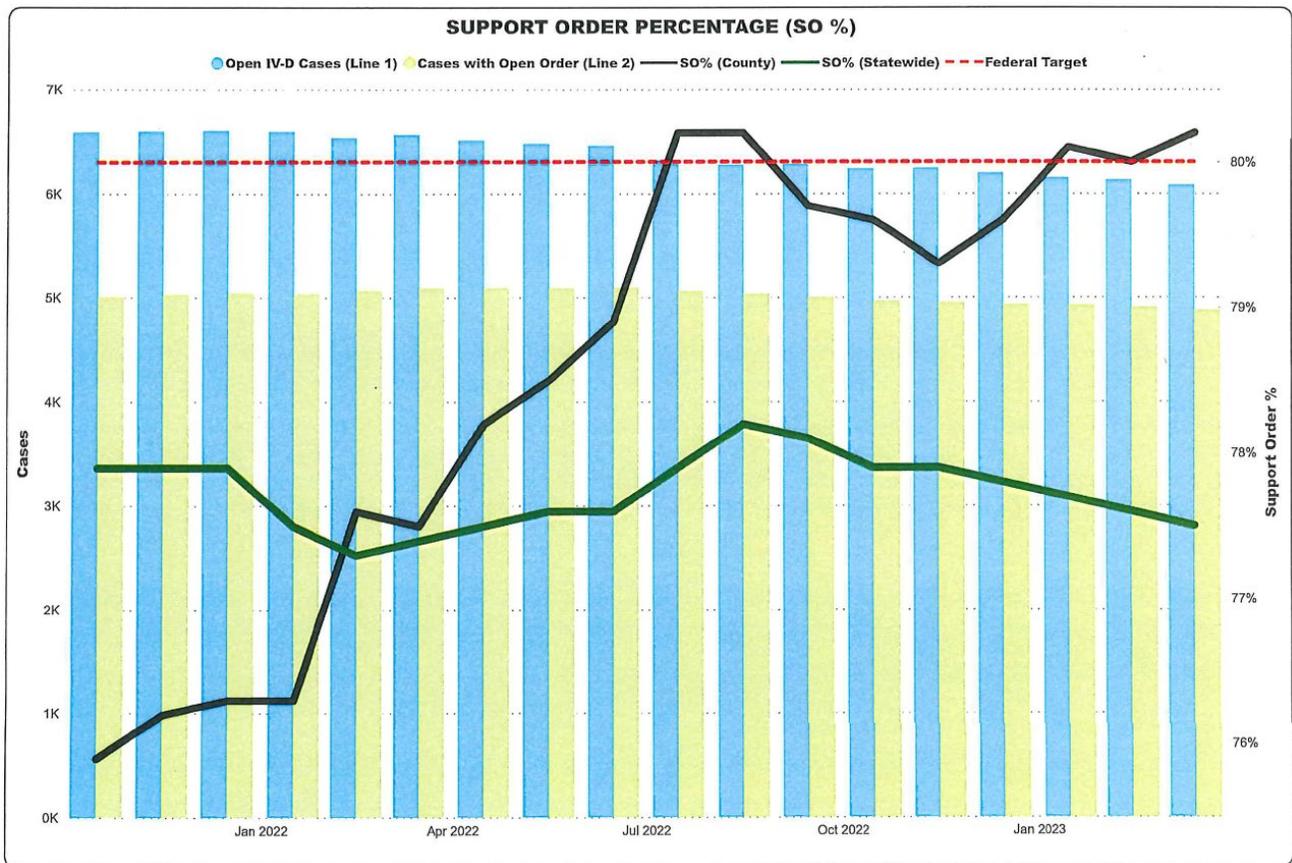
Altogether, with some other revenues streams, the FOC collected \$1,197,972.05 in revenues. Total expenses for the FOC Office in 2022 were \$1,994,826.33.

Understanding Incentive Revenues

The FOC earns incentive revenues based on five performance factors. Tables for these five performance factors are summarized below.

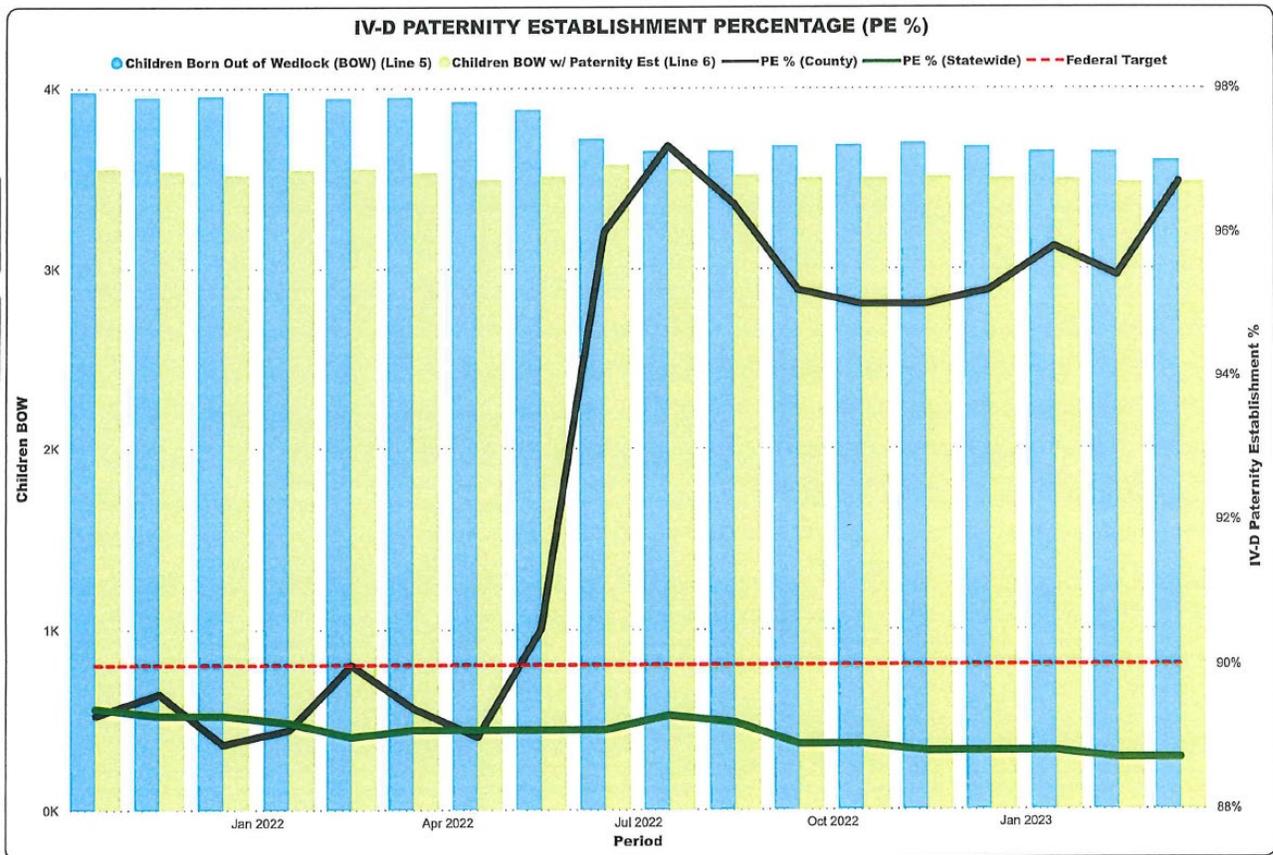
1. Support Order Percentage

This measurement shows the number of cases that have a support order established, divided by the number of cases that need to have a support order established. The FOC must have a support order percentage of 80% to earn the maximum number of incentives available. In 2022, the FOC improved to a support order percentage of 80.2%, up from a 2021, support order percentage of 79.7%. The Allegan FOC exceeds the state average of 77.5%.



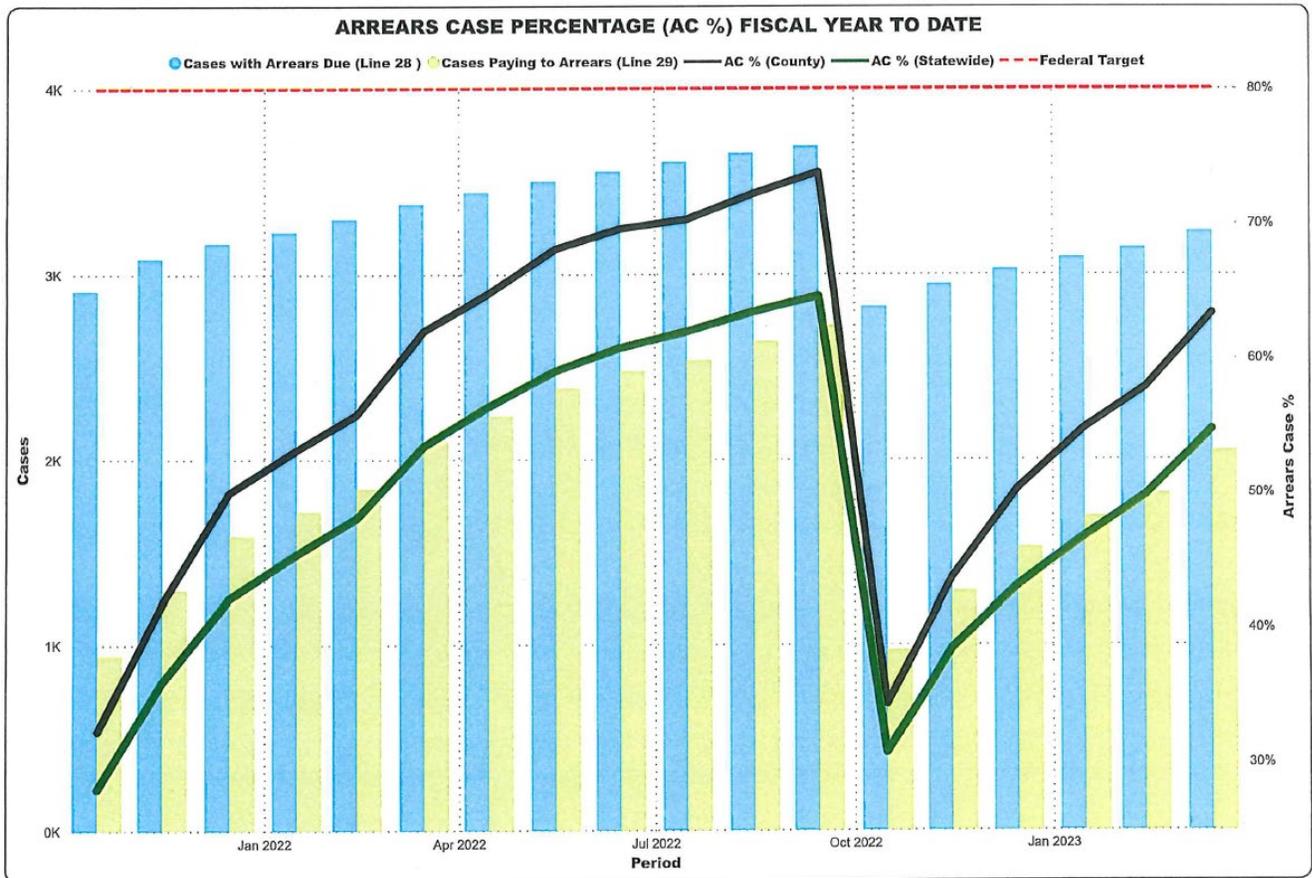
2. Paternity Establishment Percentage

This factor measures the number of children born out of wedlock (BOW) that have paternity established, divided by the number of children BOW that need to have paternity established. The FOC must have a paternity establishment percentage of 90% to earn the maximum number of incentives available. The statewide paternity establishment percentage is about 89%. The Allegan FOC paternity establishment rate in 2022 was 96.7%. This was a small increase from their 2021 percentage of 95.2%.



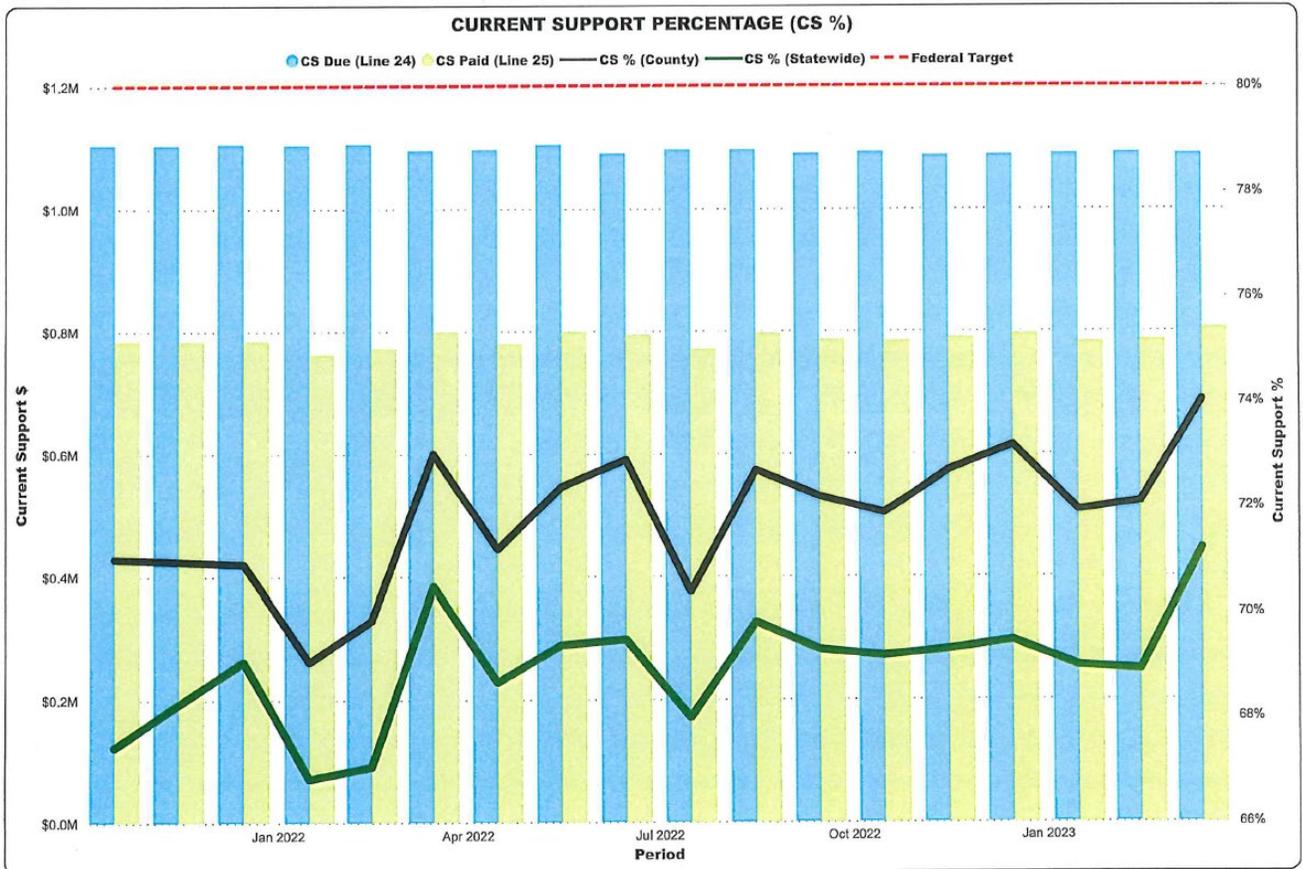
3. Arrears Case Percentage

This performance factor measures the number of support cases with past due support owed with a collection of past due support, divided by the number of support cases with a past due support balance owed. This is a cumulative percentage that increases throughout the year. The Allegan FOC exceeds the statewide average for the arrears case percentage at 63.3%.



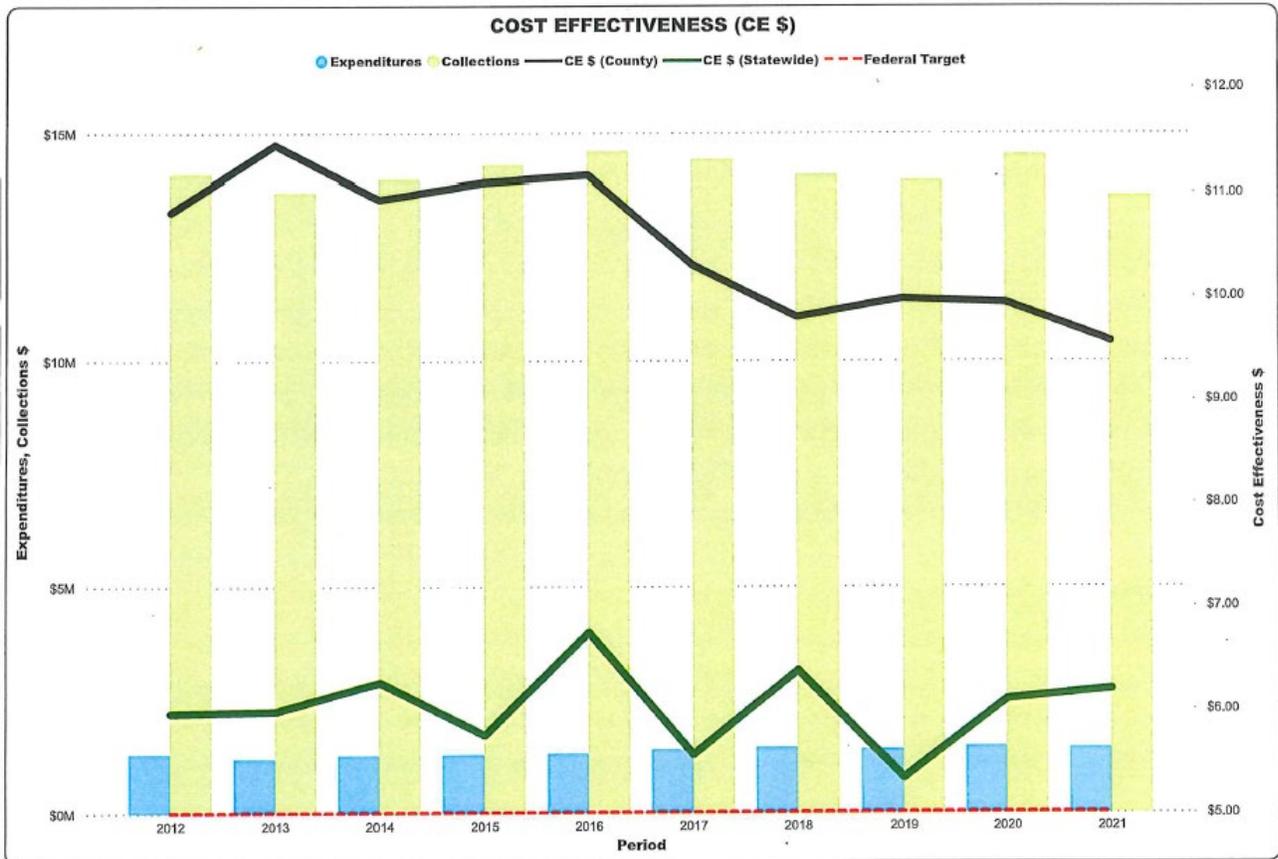
4. Current Support Percentage

This factor measures the amount of current support collected in the month it is due, divided by the amount of current support due in a month. Allegan FOC exceeds the statewide average for current support percentage. Although Allegan FOC did not meet the goal of 80%, performance improved from 2021 to 2022 by, 72.2% to 74.0%



5. Cost Effectiveness

In order to earn the maximum incentives available, the FOC must have a cost effectiveness ratio of at least \$5.00, that is for every dollar spent, the FOC must collect at least \$5.00 of support. The Allegan FOC collects \$9.56 for every dollar spent, almost twice as much as the program goal.



2023 FOC Goals

The FOC has identified the following goals for 2023:

Provide orientation session for parents with a FOC case

The FOC will implement an orientation program for parents that have a case in the Allegan FOC Office. The orientation will be offered as an in-person session with a PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint presentation will be made available on the FOC website. The orientation will inform parents regarding the role and responsibilities of the FOC as well as provide information to parents on services available at the FOC Office and the best way to communicate with the FOC Office.

Implement the Learn, Earn, And Provide (LEAP) Program

The LEAP program is offered by the Michigan Office of Child Support, Office of Michigan Works, and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity. These three entities provide funding and staff to assist parents with support obligations to obtain and maintain employment. Parents that participate will be assigned a career coach that will individualize a plan with the parent to remove barriers to employment. The LEAP program also provides incentives to participants for completing different tasks and may assist with costs such as uniforms, driver's license fees, expungement of criminal records, vehicle repairs, deposits for housing, etc. Allegan FOC Office has been identified as the next FOC Office to be able to provide this service to parents with child support cases in Allegan Circuit Court. In 2023, the FOC's goal is to have 25 parents participate in the LEAP program.

Grow the ACT program

The FOC will continue to increase participation in the ACT Program. This will be done by partnering with OnPoint and using the services available through the LEAP Program. The FOC's goal is to enroll fifteen new participants in ACT in 2023.

FOC Director Manual

Adopt a manual for the FOC Director position. This can serve as a resource for other FOC staff if the Director is temporarily absent from the Office. It may also assist in succession planning.

Review and update the FOC website

The FOC will review the current content on its website. Obsolete material will be removed and new information will be added.

Alternative Contempt Track (ACT) Program

The Circuit Court's Alternative Contempt Track (ACT) Docket is an intensive supervision program for parents that are not paying their child support obligation due to underlying issues such as poverty, mental health disorders, substance use disorders, physical disabilities, etc. A Specialized Enforcement Officer works with individuals to identify barriers to regular support payments, and locate appropriate resources/services for the parent to remove barriers to regular support payments. These parents meet on a regular basis with the Enforcement Officer and have monthly court meetings with Judge Bakker.

In 2022, eight new participants were admitted into the ACT Program. There were 15 successful discharges from the ACT program. ACT Program participants paid more than \$32,000 in payments.

Allegan FOC has one of only two ACT Programs in the State of Michigan. Allegan Courts have been asked to present to other FOC offices on the benefits of an ACT Program. Jessica Castaneda and Judge Bakker presented at the Michigan Family Support Council annual conference in October 2022.

2022 Statistics

- 27 CASES referred to ACT
 - 10 interested of which 8 were admitted
 - 4 interested w/ pending criminal charges
 - 5 expressed interested but did not move forward
 - 4 did not appear for scheduled appointments and did not respond to further follow up
 - 4 were unable to be contacted/did not respond to contact attempts
- 8 NEW participants admitted into the program---representing 10 cases
- 5 participants admitted into the program for another year—representing 7 cases
- 3 cases unsuccessful discharges for non-compliance (includes those admitted in 2021)
- 15 successful discharges (includes those admitted in 2021, and those admitted for another year)
- Current number of ACTIVE ACT participants as of March 28, 2023
 - 10 participants representing 13 cases
- 4 participants have cases in other counties

ACT Payments

- Payments for 2022 Discharged Cases
 - 5 participants continue to have ACTIVE income withholding and payments continue to be received
 - \$23,261.06 collected from ACT participants
- Payments for 2022 ACTIVE ACT participants
 - \$9,073.91 collected in 2022 from current, ACTIVE participants
 - 6 participants began and continue making payments (including sporadic payments/small payments)
- Grand total collected from all 2022 Act participants: \$32,334.97

Challenges faced by ACT program and participants in 2022:

2022 proved to be a difficult year for participants. Many participants dealt with and continue to deal with lack of housing, lack of transportation, lack of medical care, substance use, and mental health challenges. This makes finding and maintaining employment extra difficult.

In 2022, mental health ranked #3 of the most challenging barrier for individuals in the ACT program. Several participants not only have major mental health needs, but are also struggling with being unhoused, having no transportation, physical health issues, and being unable to obtain steady gainful employment. Yet others struggle with mental health needs, reliable transportation, and have a difficult time getting to and from employment when they do secure a job.

News from the ACT program:

ACT did not grow as expected in 2022. The program currently has several available slots that will be filled in 2023. Although growth was slow in terms of capacity—the ACT program has been working with OnPoint Allegan to develop a seamless referral process from Friend of the Court to OnPoint programming. This possible partnership is looking to be solidified and implemented by late spring/early summer 2023. This referral process would involve case management from certain OnPoint programming for cases referred to them for services. This would allow the Specialized Enforcement Office (SEO) to potentially take on more cases as some of the ACT participants may be receiving services from OnPoint.

In October 2022 the Allegan and Ottawa County ACT programs—along with Judge Bakker (via Zoom) did a presentation at the Fall Michigan Family Support Council annual conference. The breakout session received lots for positive feedback. Since the presentation, several counties have approached Allegan ACT program with questions regarding how to start their own ACT programs or wanting more information regarding the program. The FOC has received calls and emails from St. Clair, Berrien, Cass, Van Buren, Wexford FOC, and most recently from the Circuit Court Administrator from Lenawee Co. This is exciting news as more

counties are looking at Allegan as an innovator in child support enforcement and in the work that is being done in the Allegan FOC in regards to working with families.

Success Stories from 2022

In 2022 one of the participants started their own landscape business and was able pay off half of the arrears they previously owed. This participant also received substance use disorder treatment and upon successful discharge from the program had been sober for almost two years. The participant is now looking into becoming a peer recovery coach.

Another participant had not worked in almost two years before being admitted to the ACT program; they are now employed and making payments. The participant indicates they had struggled with depression after having a heart attack in 2019 and being unable to do work they had previously done. With encouragement, accountability and assistance with job searches--they were able to find appropriate, gainful employment willing to work with their physical limitations.

One participant obtained employment shortly after their admittance to the ACT program. Since then—they have not missed a payment on their support cases—not only those cases in Allegan Co, but also cases have they in other counties.

Future program goals:

- Partnerships/collaboration with local agencies/resources for transportation, employment, mental health, housing services
- Work to grow payee participation in the program
 - Allows for program to truly be family centered
- Program incentives
- Program visibility in the Allegan community
 - Graduation events
 - Continue to get the word out about ACT to the general public—attend community events, give presentations to local agencies who work with clients who may have support cases in Allegan
 - Media coverage/social presence—develop social media posts, short video clips to be run on FOC information monitor
- Drug/alcohol testing for those struggling with addiction to go along with treatment
 - Helps to hold participant accountable to sobriety
- Peer lead group meetings
 - Empower participants
 - Networking and engagement
 - Special guest speakers/agencies/resources to do presentations on various topics as determined by needs of participants
- Continue to change the perception of the Friend of the Court
 - FOC is accessible
 - FOC is family centered
 - FOC is helpful
 - FOC is a resource

- Work to change ACT to a true specialty court
 - Happens with more FOCs implementing their own ACT programs
- Grow Program up to 30+ participants
 - Currently program is designed for 15-20 participants
- Work with other counties to help them start/implement their own ACT programs
 - Several counties have reached out

ACT program participant remarks:

“...my anxiety made it hard to ask for help, it was hard figuring out where to go or where to start. Since being in ACT, I’ve learned about all kinds of resources that I never knew were out there.”

~ Current ACT participant

“...never thought someone at Friend of the Court would actually try to help me and not just throw me in jail. Never thought I would be listened to and heard by my caseworker.”

~2022 successful discharge

“...this program has helped me so much. If I could tell everybody about ACT, I would. This program needs to be in every FOC office. Judge Bakker actually cares and listens when we have our review hearings. Jessica is always willing to help or point me in the right direction.

~Current ACT participant

“...I didn’t even know the ACT program existed, I wish I knew about it sooner. If I had known about ACT sooner, I feel I would have gotten the help I needed sooner and been further ahead than I currently am in ACT. I’m doing better now, but I can only imagine how much farther I’d be had I known about ACT sooner.

~Current ACT participant

The main goal of the ACT program is to better the lives of children. The ACT program supports parents who support children--and by doing so, it ultimately betters the lives of the children of Allegan County.

Jessica Castañeda
 Specialized Enforcement Officer
 Allegan County Friend of the Court
 Alternative Contempt Track Program

Allegan County Legal Assistance Center

“ACLAC”

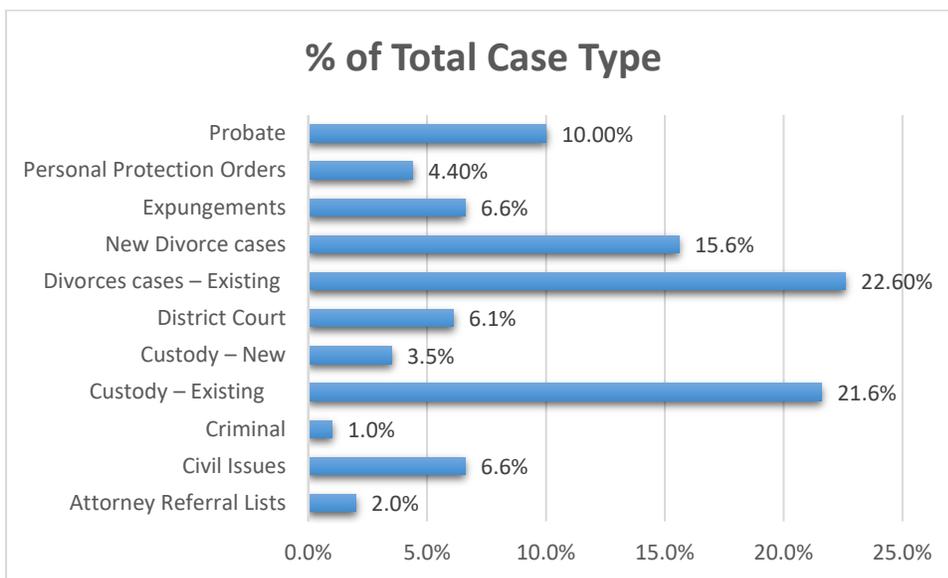


Allegan County
Legal Assistance
CENTER

Allegan County Legal Assistance Center's mission is to provide tools, resources and information to aid Allegan County residents and persons having civil matters in Allegan County courts. This assistance is provided at no cost, however there is a small charge for copies.

- **3,028** Patrons served in 2022
- **23,877** Since opening July 31, 2012
- 68% of patrons assisted have income \$40,000 and less
- The age of our cliental varies, but the majority are between 21 and 60
- During 2022, there were 15 community presentations
- 45 staff trainings were conducted

2022 statistics by case type



48th Circuit, Family Division

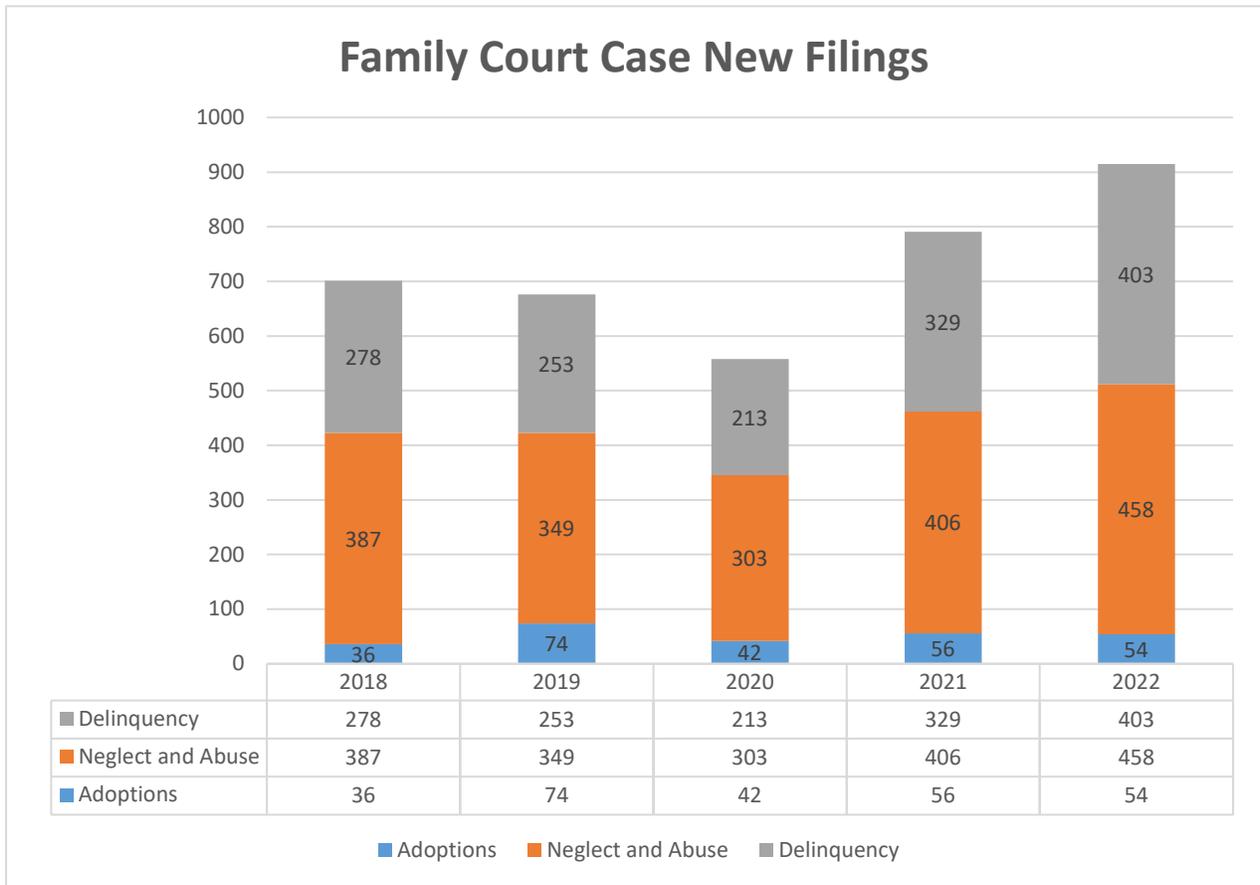
2022, represented the first full year for the Court to handle juvenile delinquency matters involving minors who were age seventeen at the time of the commission of an offense. This was based on previously enacted “Raise the Age” legislation implemented in October 2021. Previously, these cases would have been handled by the Circuit or District Court. The Court handled sixteen juveniles who accounted for forty-three petitions (charges) in this category. Although not a tremendous number of cases, there were a significant number of petitions. The Court will continue to monitor this area moving forward.

Competency Evaluations in the juvenile delinquency area is another interesting statistic. There were thirteen juveniles evaluated in 2021 involving twenty-six petitions (charges). In 2022, the number of evaluations dropped to nine juveniles but twenty-two petitions were filed in these cases. As of April 1, 2023, there have been five juveniles evaluated. The total number of juveniles involved is not statistically large in comparison to the total number of juveniles each year, however, if a juvenile is found incompetent to proceed, the petitions are dismissed. This is an on-going concern given the ages of the juveniles handled by the Court and their mental health needs. Additionally, Competency Evaluations are a non-allowable under the Child Care Fund. These expenses fall completely to the family court general fund activity. In 2021, these expenses totaled \$15,967.50 and in 2022, \$13,235.00 in general fund expenditures

Another topic affecting Family Court is the setting aside of juvenile adjudications (convictions). The statute in this area allows for a juvenile to seek the setting aside of certain adjudications after a specified time. As with adults, this statute was modified in July 2021 to expand the ability of juveniles to set aside certain adjudications. This is not a frequently used process by juveniles. Only five petitions seeking to set aside prior adjudications were filed in 2022. The statutory modifications in 2021 also provided expanded relief for juveniles in this area. Beginning in July 2023, for a significant number of offenses, juveniles will automatically have their adjudications set aside without having to file a petition with the court. Hopefully, for a number of juveniles, violations of the law as a minor will not be a hinderance as they move into adulthood.

In September 2022, the Michigan Supreme Court modified various court rules in the area of videoconferencing. These changes were implemented after review of procedures that began at the onset of the pandemic. The modified court rules presume certain proceedings will be conducted by videoconference, other proceedings are allowed to be conducted by videoconference, and lastly, certain proceedings are prohibited from taking place by videoconference. The court rules do allow the court to exercise discretion, after review of specified criteria, to allow or deny the use of videoconferencing for an identified proceeding.

We would like to mention our court recorders and the fine work they perform on a daily basis. In 2022, two of our Family Division Clerks had their positions reclassified based on their court scheduling and recording duties. All three clerks have performed admirably in their roles. They cover all Family Division hearing for the Attorney/Referees, while also covering on an as-needed basis for Judge Buck, Judge Bakker, and Judge Kengis. This sharing of resources has worked very well for the entire court.



Community Probation

2022: A Snapshot

Cumulative Statistics:

<u>Measured Area</u>	<u>Number</u>
Total Cases	114
New Petitions Adjudicated (on current or previous probationers)	20
Probation Violations Adjudicated	47
Community Service Hours Ordered	654
Days Spent at Home	11,421
Days Spent in Detention	690
Days Spent on a Tether	273
Days Spent in Residential Care	1,459
Total Days on Probation	14,134
Number of Children Taking Medication	49 (43.8% of caseload)
Total Number of Contacts Made	6,735
Number of Recidivists	14 (12% of caseload)
Number of Repeat Offenders	11 (10% of caseload)
Probationers Released During FY	67
Number Released Who Met Goals	58 (86.5% success rate)

Average Probationer:

<u>Measured Area</u>	<u>Number</u>
Average Age	14.9
Number of New Petitions Per Case	.18
Number of PV's Per Child	.42
Average Days at Home	101
Average Days in Detention	6.1
Average Days in Residential Care	12.9
Average Days on Probation	125
Average Grade	9 th
Average Number of Contacts Per Case	59

Did You Know?

- The average juvenile on probation in Allegan County is a 15-year-old 9th grader.
- On average, about 40% of probationers had his/her probation violated this past year.
- The average probationer spends approximately 4.8% of his/her days on probation in detention and approximately 10% of his/her days on probation in residential care.
- Of the children released from probation during the FY, approximately 86% were successful in meeting his/her treatment goals.
- Approximately 12.3% of the total caseload includes children who were previously on probation and came back to the court for subsequent offenses.
- Approximately 8.8% of the total caseload includes children who commit new offenses while on probation.
- On average, children on probation are contacted 59 times by his/her probation officer, with 19 of those contacts being face-to-face.
- The average child involved with the court spent approximately 18 weeks (or approximately 4.5 months) on probation.
- Approximately 43.8% of the children who had contact with the court during the previous year were taking prescribed medication.
- The average number of community service hours ordered per case is approximately 6.

Family Court Hires New Sex Offender Treatment Provider

Over the past year, the Court received notice that Don LeMahieu, a well-respected sex offender treatment provider, was retiring. Mr. LeMahieu provided several decades of service to the Court in adolescent sex offender treatment, including sex offender assessments and individual and group therapy. To replace Mr. LeMahieu, the Court contracted services with Ron Grooters of Homeward Bound Therapeutic Services, LLC. The transition from Mr. LeMahieu to Mr. Grooters has been a successful one, and the youth and families of Allegan County are being well-served in this area. The Court is hopeful that the partnership with Mr. Grooters will be a long and fruitful one as court-involved youth continue to receive the same high quality of therapeutic assessment and care.

Community Justice Program

The Community Justice Program is staffed by three Community Justice Officers and are supervised by the Cheever Treatment Center Director. The Community Justice Program offers the following services to the court.

- Surveillance
- Community Service
- Aftercare Services
- Elementary Truancy
- Adoption and Emancipation Studies
- Why Try Groups

Surveillance

Community Justice will supervise youth that have been released with bond rules. Community Justice will monitor the bond while the youth go through the court process. Community Justice provides after hour surveillance for youth that are on probation and need extra support with staying in the community. Community Justice supports families and youth that might be having a crisis situation at home, working through the issue with the goal that we wouldn't have to bring the youth back in front of the court or even lodge in the Youth Home. Community Justice will assist and support the families in setting up services as necessary.

Community Service

Youth are court ordered to complete a certain number of hours to repair the harm that they have caused to the community. These hours need to be completed before they are allowed to be off of probation. Community Justice will help youth find projects in their community to complete these hours. Community Justice also offers the youth projects that are supervised by the Community Justice. These projects consist of:

Community Garden

This garden is located on the Allegan County Youth Home's property. The produce that is harvested by the garden is shared with the Youth Home, food pantries, and churches. The youth are also allowed to take produce home to their families.

Allegan County Fair Grounds

The youth do a number of jobs for the fair throughout the year. These projects consist of leaf pick up in the fall, cleaning barns and buildings after shows and events, painting fences and buildings, and landscaping around the grounds.

Park and Ride Clean up

Clean up park and rides and park around the county. Some of the areas that we clean up are JC park, Hopkins, and Saugatuck Park and ride areas.

Safe Harbor - Leaf clean up in the fall and return pop cans that have been donated to Safe Harbor as a fundraiser for their organization.

TMI - Help detail and clean Allegan County buses and vehicles several times a year.

Facility Management - Help out facility with grounds work around the Dumont Lake Complex throughout the year as needed.

Aftercare Services

Community Justice stays involved with youth that have completed treatment in Cheever or the Detention Center. We provide after hour support to the youth and their family to help the transition back into the community. If the youth and family need assistance with getting services in place, Community Justice will support them. Community Justice will also help youth look for employment or other opportunities like Michigan Works so that they can be successful in the community.

Elementary Truancy

Elementary schools will refer youth to have Community Justice get involved when a youth is having attendance issues. Community Justice will do a home visit to see if there are any services the families might need to help with attendance. If the visit doesn't change the attendance issues, then a meeting with the school and parents will be set up. If that doesn't address the issue, then a referral will be made to the truancy officer to have educational neglect charges filed.

Adoption and Emancipation Studies

Community Justice will do a home study ordered by the court to decide if the adopting parents or parent are appropriate to adopt. Community Justice will interview all parties involved in the case and will make a recommendation to the Court. Emancipations are another service that is offered by Community Justice. An interview will be completed with the teenager to decide if they are able to live independently on their own. A recommendation after the investigation will be shared with the court.

Why Try Group

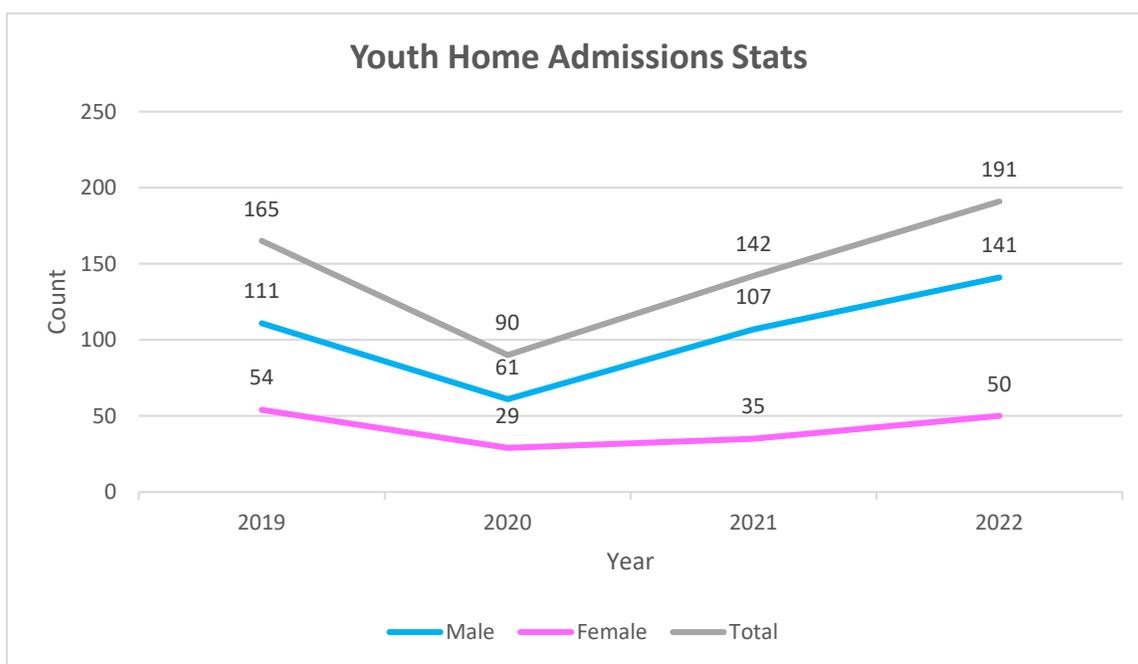
The Why Try curriculum consists of ten visual analogies with solutions and questions to help youth gain insight into how to deal with daily challenges. The program's goal is to help youth gain insight in dealing with daily challenges, frustration, and life's daily pressures and challenges. This group is offered to all of the Allegan elementary schools and Fennville schools. We also do a summer Why Try group for kids that have been court ordered to participate and complete. Community justice will also work with some of the Why Try youth individually if the Court deems necessary.

2022 Statistics

Throughout 2022, Community Justice worked with 42 youth on community service, and 87 youth participated in their Why Try groups. Surveillance was done on 95 different youths. Community Justice received 115 elementary truancy referrals. Of those 115 referrals, only 10 ended up with petitions being filed.

Juvenile Detention

The Detention Program is designed to provide a short-term, physically restrictive, safe and humane environment for youth, both male and female, ages 10-17 who are detained pending further court action. Youth under the age of 18 who are charged with committing a delinquent or criminal act are processed through the juvenile justice system. Though similar to the adult criminal justice system, the juvenile justice process operates according to the premise that youth are fundamentally different from adults, both in terms of level of responsibility and potential for rehabilitation. In 2022, the juvenile center admitted 191 juveniles, with the average length of stay being 22 days. Release from detention occurs only through posting of bond (if applicable), or by order of the Court. Raise The Age (RTA) went into effect October 1st 2021. Detention had fourteen 17-year-old admissions during 2022.



Although not a treatment program, the detention program offers daily programming and activities with the framework of a token economy system through the use of daily points and a level system to help juveniles learn how to use more appropriate, effective behaviors.

Juvenile Detention Programing

Education

The educational program at the Allegan County Juvenile Detention Center is provided by Outlook Academy. Residents are expected to fully participate in the education program provided daily during the school year. In most cases, residents will be enrolled in school after 3 days in detention. Their prior school is notified and records are requested. Students are encouraged to stay on track with their academics and often use a credit recovery program called Edmentum. Residents are screened in the area of reading shortly after admission and will receive individual reading intervention if testing determines they are below their grade level. GED completion is also an option for residents 16 or above with little chance of earning the credits needed to receive a diploma. In 2022, three residents earned their GED Diploma.

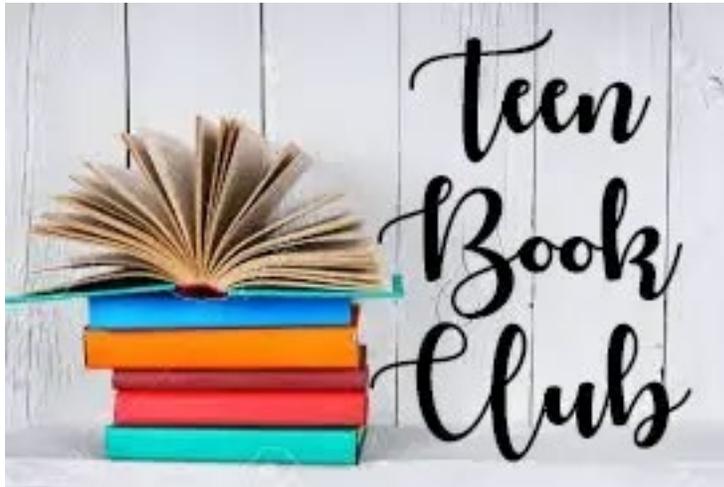
Why Try

“Why Try” is an evidence-based national program used in schools and correctional facilities, to help kids overcome daily challenges and live lives of opportunity, freedom, and self-respect. The curriculum teaches social and emotional skills using a practical, multi-sensory approach. Hands-on learning activities engage the youth while they learn skills needed to improve behavior and academics. The curriculum utilizes a series of ten visual analogies that teach essential life skills like: improved decision making, dealing with peer pressure, impulse control, obeying laws and rules, plugging into support systems, and having a future vision.



Book Clubs

Scheduled book club and shared journal writing is conducted at the beginning of second shift. It is an opportunity to promote a love for literature and a positive attitude towards reading. A book is read by the youth and staff and discussions are generated. In an effort to help model a culture of on-going education, staff participate in their own book clubs throughout the year. While book clubs are an opportunity to share and learn together, they are also used as a way to model strategies the staff can use when facilitating book clubs with the youth.



Life Skills

Residents are coached to demonstrate competency in several areas including; laundry, room care and bed making, proper meal manners, meal preparation, food storage, use of limited kitchen appliances, maintaining personal appearance, learning self-awareness regarding strengths and limitations, managing your time, and be a lifelong learner.

Gardening

The gardening program kicks off in April by transplanting seeds into the garden. The program helps youth learn about growing vegetables, helps them understand where healthy food comes from, and provides a way to get active outdoors. Gardening also helps develop responsibility, a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence. Gardening is also a therapeutic tool that helps develop relationships with the staff and residents.



Music Therapy

Music therapy is offered to enhance youths' efforts in programs that address social and vocational skill building, conflict resolution, attention control, and problem-solving skills. Music therapy also helps residents explore thoughts, feelings and develop healthy coping skills.

Prime For Life

Prime for Life is a program impacting alcohol and drug abuse for people of all ages. It is designed to gently but powerfully, challenge common beliefs and attitudes that directly contribute to high-risk alcohol and drug use. The program goals are to reduce the risks for health problems and impairment. Prime for Life is provided by On Point staff and by a trained detention staff.

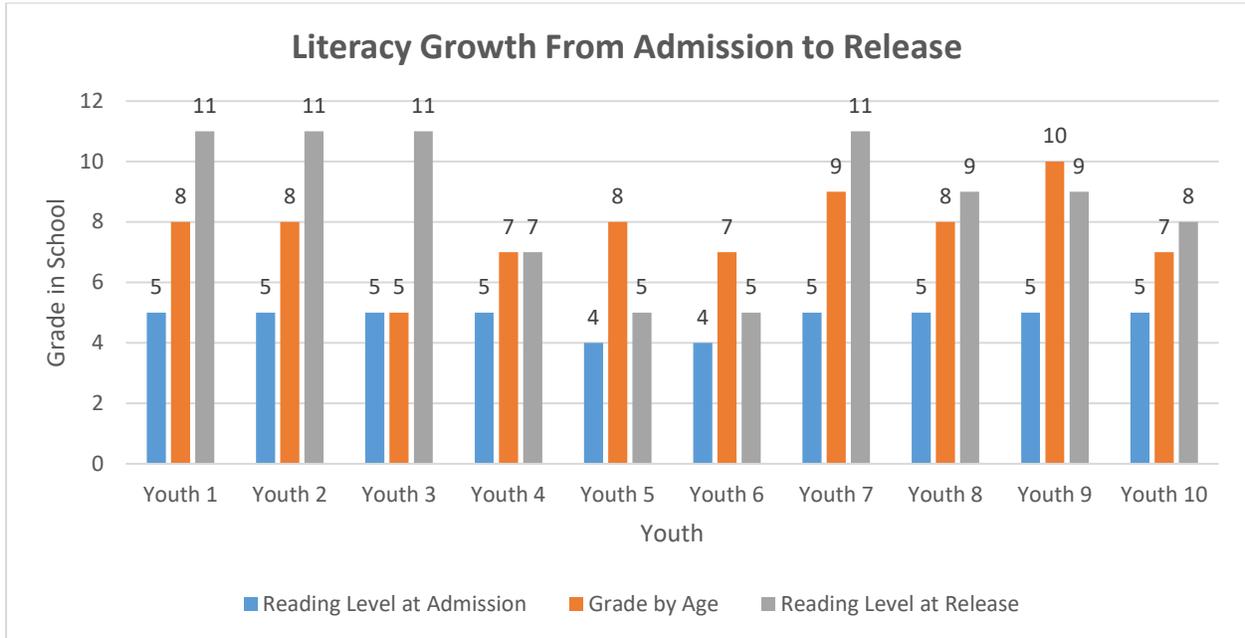
Mi Works

Michigan Works provides tools necessary for life preparation through resume building, interviewing, and employment related strategies. It provides selected students with information and training as it relates to employment.

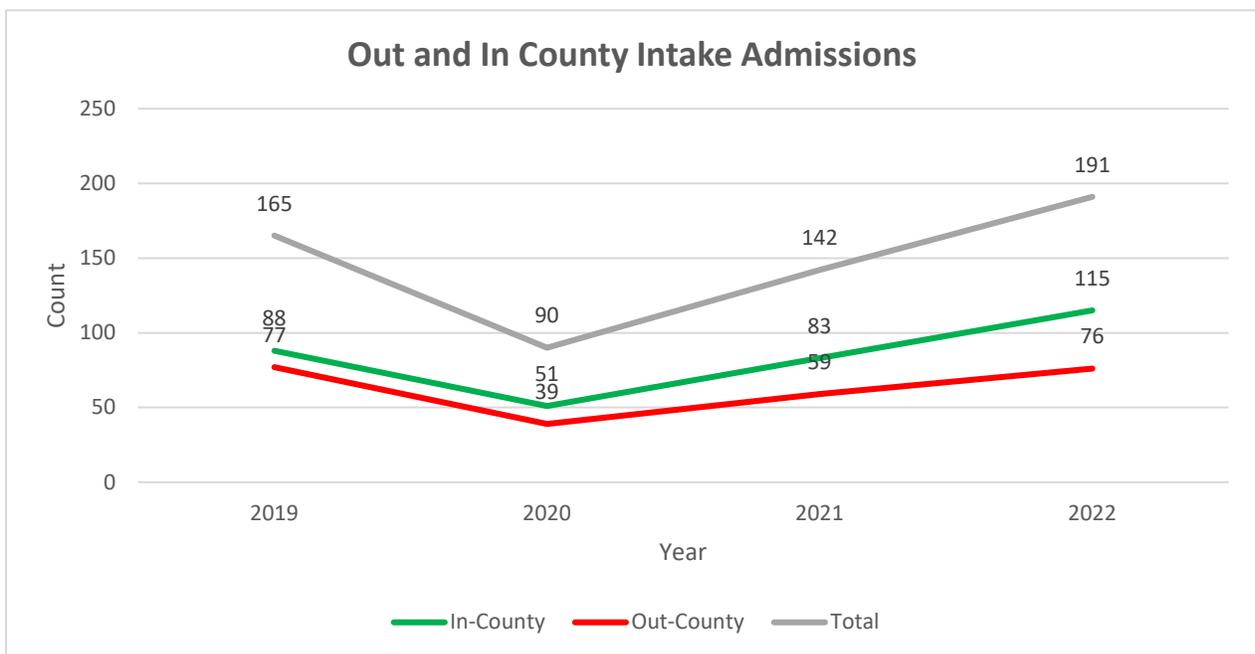
Barnabas Ministries

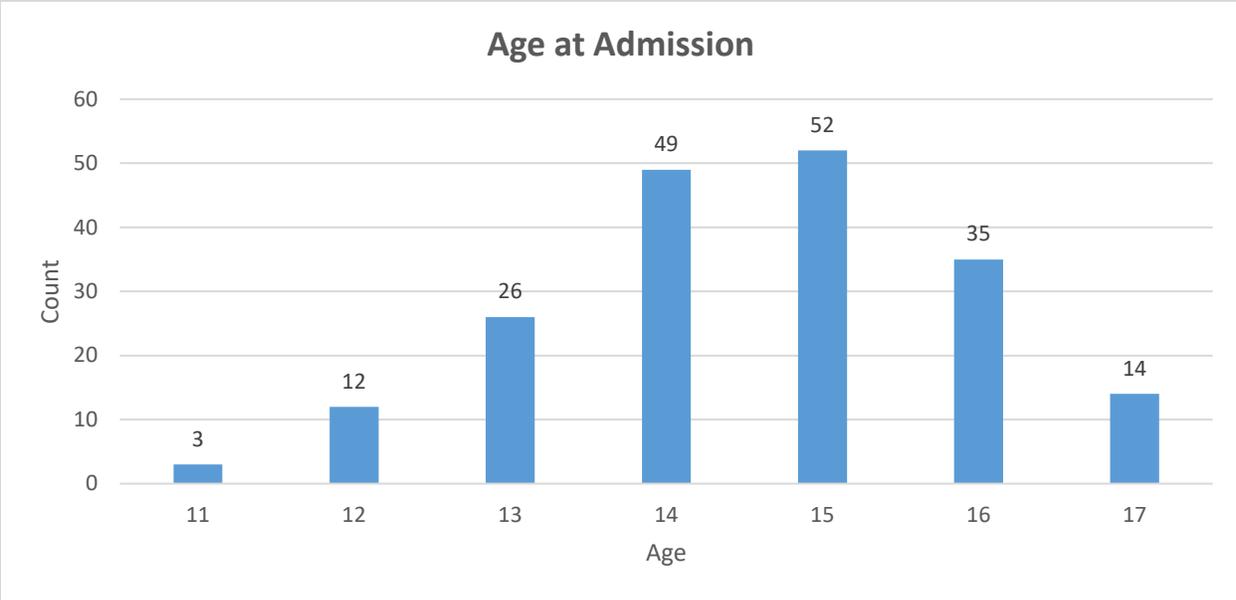
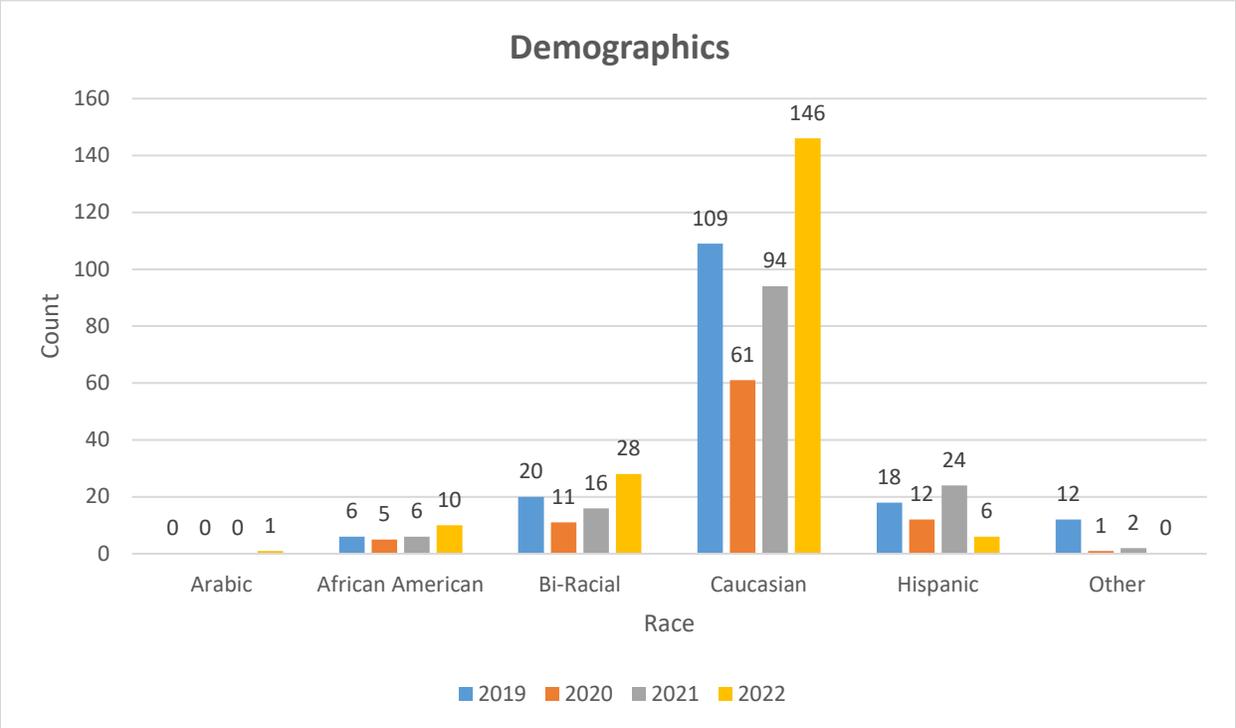
Barnabas Ministries provides our facility with weekly youth groups and mentoring, as well as scheduling local pastors to come in for Sunday afternoon services.

Juvenile Detention Statistics



In 2022, 10 youth were detained 30 days or more. This table is a sample of youth tested using the San Diego Quick Assessment tool at the time of admission and a minimum 30 days following admission giving us a clear indication of growth. As you can see in the graph above, most of the youth met or exceeded their par reading level for their grade. All 10 raised their reading level.





Cheever Treatment Center

Cheever Treatment Center (CTC) is a 14-bed, court-ordered, residential center that has served the youth of Allegan and other counties since 1978. The program is co-ed, and is a combination of residential and home-based programming. Cheever is non-secure and is appropriate for youth with security needs in the low to medium range. The program allows youth to move from a very supportive and structured environment to one of increased freedom and responsibility as they develop and implement new skills. Length of stay for Cheever varies depending on the functioning of the youth, family dynamics, level of motivation by the youth, and aftercare options. Average length of stay is 6-9 months.

Cheever provides many services to the youth and families that we work with. Residents and their families are involved in:

- individual and family therapy
- music therapy, group work/teachings
- treatment goal planning
- team/family meetings
- surveillance
- drug testing
- community integrative services
- life skills training.

CTC also provides a number of services from outside agencies such as educational, psychiatry, spiritual, medical, pottery classes and job training.

When a resident is admitted, they are assigned a “treatment team.” The team consists of Cheever staff, the Probation and Community Justice officer, a therapist, and parents/guardians. This team then assesses the strength and needs of the youth and family, and creates treatment goals which focus on areas to improve and skills to learn and implement. These goals are reviewed on a monthly basis in what we call **Team Meetings**. As the residents meet and accomplish their individual goals, life opens up, and the transition back into the community and out of the program begins.

Cheever is based on two main philosophies, **Choice Theory/Reality Therapy** and **Balanced and Restorative Justice**. The residents that are ordered to Cheever consistently struggle with relationships in their lives. These relationships are typically with parents, other family members, teachers, community members and peers. In teaching the residents Choice Theory, our goal is to help them have a better understanding of what they control, ultimately leading to better relationships in their lives. Understanding our wants, needs, and reasons for our actions is critical in understanding our behaviors and replacing them with something more effective. Balanced and Restorative Justice involves three components of teaching. **Accountability** is the first thing we look for in working with a youth. This involves them

describing in detail their crimes and looking at the overall impact their choices had on their victims and the community. **Competency Development** is the second part. Cheever teaches new skills to assist the youth in making more effective choices. Residents identify specific examples from their lives with regards to what they need to do different and how they will implement these new skills. **Community Safety** is the third piece. It is important to identify and practice the skills that will help them live effectively at home and in the community.

Cheever not only works with the resident in building new skills, but also the family. On a bi-weekly basis, Cheever staff, and the youth, are teaching their families these concepts in what we call **Family Meetings**. The goal of these meetings is for the parent/guardians to increase their own skill level and feel better equipped to support positive change in the home environment.

Community Service is also a central part of the Cheever Program. Residents are expected to engage in community service while living on the unit and while at home. Through Community Service we believe that the residents can symbolically repair some of the harm caused, make positive community connections, learn new skills, and develop empathy. Some of the community service projects we are involved in include:

- Adopt a Highway
- Toy Drive – Operation Homefront
- Back to School Supplies Drive – Operation Homefront
- Beach point
- Boomer Bash
- Adopt a Beach
- Veteran’s Stand Down
- Senior Car Wash
- Other seasonal projects in the community as needed

In 2022, we serviced 25 youth at CTC. We saw an increase in female residents in 2022, with almost half of those 25 being female. We continue to experience youth being referred and/or coming in with untreated complex trauma. The National Institute of Health indicates that in one study that 92% of youth involved in the juvenile justice system have experienced at least one form of trauma, with multiple traumas being the norm. Trauma responses may appear as delinquent behavior but require consideration as an undiagnosed mental health need. As such, we are assuming a more trauma-informed practice at CTC. This involves educating and guiding staff in trauma and considering individualized approaches for each resident and family that take history and background into consideration.

The number one mission of the Cheever Treatment Center is to provide a safe, structured, and respectful environment for both youth and staff. Staff lead by example in demonstrating the same level of respect to the residents as we expect from them. As much as they can, staff keep residents updated on the schedule for each day so that they know what to expect and what is expected of them. Last year we had to perform only one physical restraint.

In conclusion, as a program, we are occasionally asked about our “**success rate.**” With so many factors and moving pieces, it can be hard to determine the impact we have on the youth and families we serve. Sometimes we see the success right away, but often times it takes a few years, some maturing, and growing before what we planted sets in. With that, we decided to collect some data, going back almost 5 years, from 2.7.18 to 1.24.23. Using the Judicial Data Warehouse, we looked at felony charges of previous residents. Within those dates, we serviced 74 youth. Of those 74, we looked at the 47 that are now over 18 years of age. We found that 7 of those 47 adults had committed a felony. On the flip side, that means that 85% of the residents that were in Cheever, during this time period, moved into adulthood and were not charged with a felony as of 1.24.23.