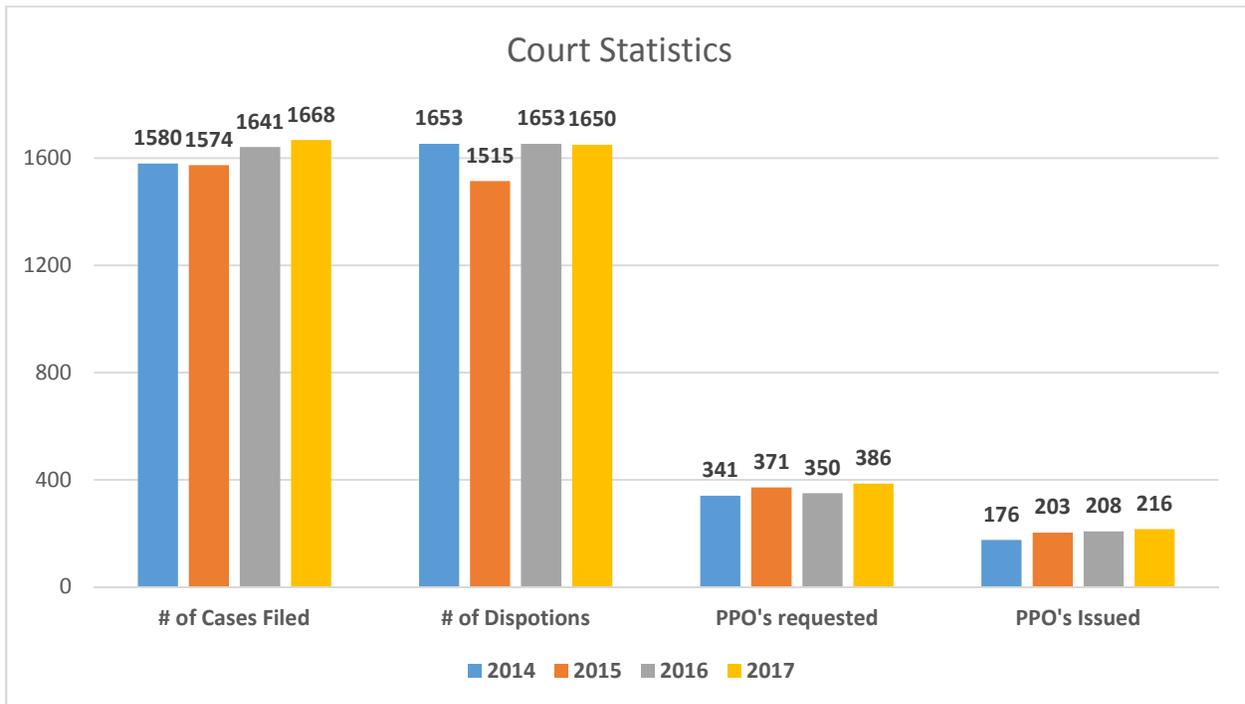


48th Circuit Court
2018 Annual Information Report
Thursday, June 14, 2018
Criminal and Civil
Friend of the Court
Family Division

Hon. Margaret Bakker, Chief Circuit Court Judge
Hon. Roberts Kengis, Circuit Court Judge
Hon. Michael Buck, Presiding Family Court Judge
Erin Stender, Interim Circuit Court Administrator



Criminal/Civil Cases and Dispositions 2014-2017



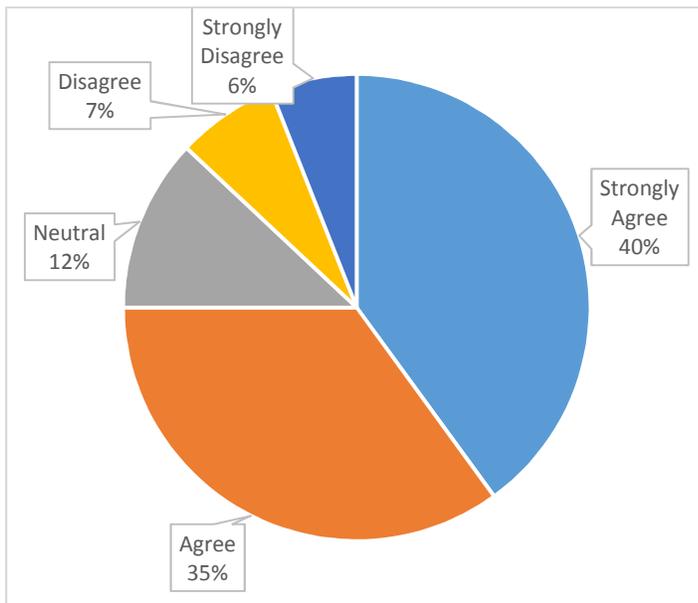
2017, was another record breaking year for the Circuit Court with the highest number of cases filed (1668) over the past four years. Dispositions remained high at (1650), second highest over past 4 years. Personal Protection orders requested and issued saw slight increases as well.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results, Allegan County Circuit / Probate Court

In 2015, the Allegan County Courts began conducting annual customer satisfaction surveys. Below are the 2016 statistics from the Circuit Court / Probate Court surveys. The 2017 statistics will be available by the end of June.

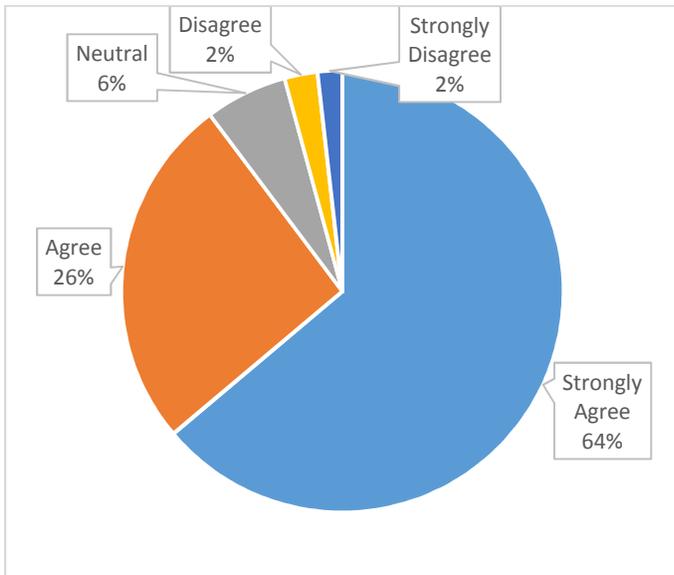
Court customers were asked to rate the following statements.

1.) I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time today:



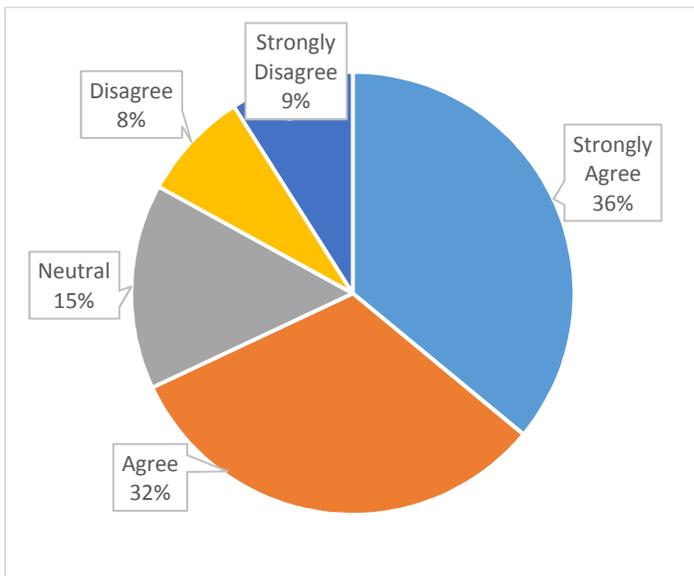
Question 1		
Total Responses	160	
Strongly Agree	69	40%
Agree	51	35%
Neutral	18	12%
Disagree	14	7%
Strongly Disagree	8	6%

2.) I was treated with courtesy and respect by court staff:



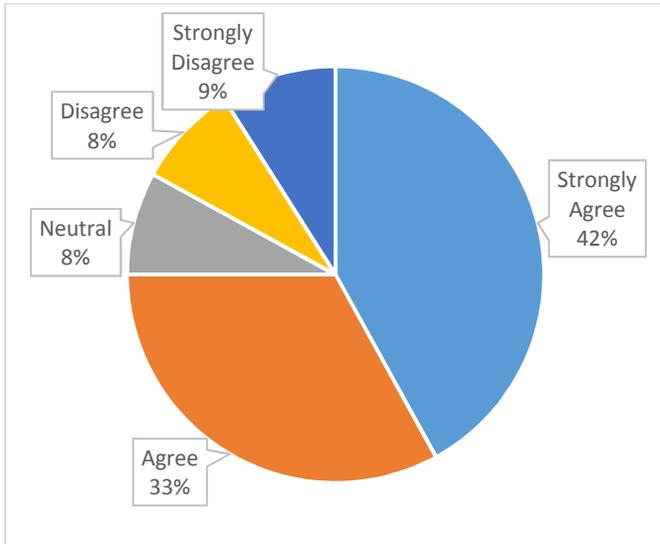
Question 2		
Total Responses	166	
Strongly Agree	106	64%
Agree	43	26%
Neutral	10	6%
Disagree	4	2%
Strongly Disagree	3	2%

3.) The way the case was handled was fair:



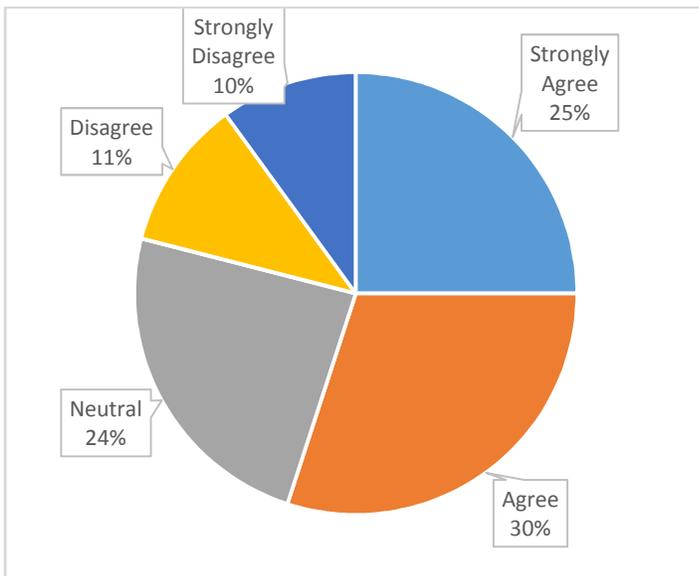
Question 3		
Total Responses	98	
Strongly Agree	40	36%
Agree	30	32%
Neutral	14	15%
Disagree	7	8%
Strongly Disagree	7	9%

4.) The judge/magistrate/referee treated everyone with courtesy and respect:



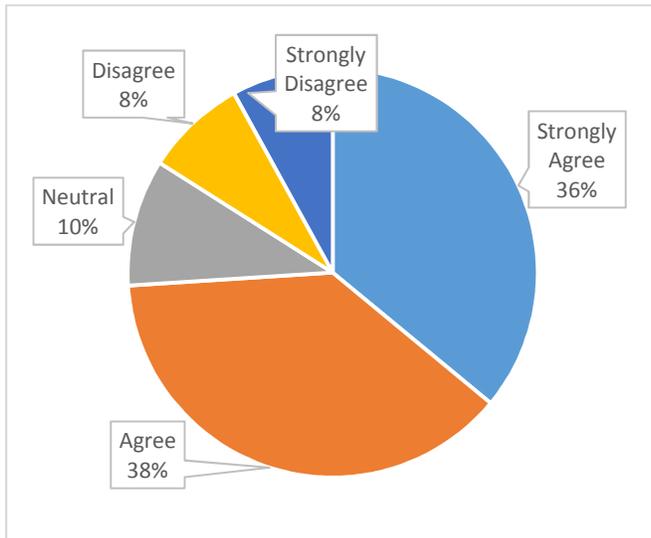
Question 4		
Total Responses	99	
Strongly Agree	47	42%
Agree	30	33%
Neutral	9	8%
Disagree	6	8%
Strongly Disagree	7	9%

5.) The outcome in my case was favorable to me:



Question 5		
Total Responses	84	
Strongly Agree	27	25%
Agree	24	30%
Neutral	19	24%
Disagree	7	11%
Strongly Disagree	7	10%

6.) As I leave the court, I understand what happened in my case:



Question 6

Total Responses	95	
Strongly Agree	39	36%
Agree	33	38%
Neutral	10	10%
Disagree	6	8%
Strongly Disagree	7	8%

Swift and Sure Sanctions

Probation Program

(for adult felony offenders, grant funded)

The main goals of Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program (SSSPP) are to reduce drug use, recidivism, and incarceration. SSSPP targets probationers who generally have long histories of drug use and involvement with the criminal justice system and who are considered at high risk of failing probation or returning to prison. SSSPP begins with a warning/notification hearing in front of a judge, who makes expectations of compliance clear to the probationer: violation of probation conditions will not be tolerated, and each violation will result in an immediate brief stay in jail.

SSSPP was designed with a theoretical foundation that emphasizes clearly defined behavioral expectations for probationers, the use of swift and certain sanctions when probationers fail to comply with those expectations, and elements of procedural justice that make it clear to probationers that courtroom members (probation officers and supervising judges) want them to succeed.

The 48th Circuit Court has participated in this state grant funded program since 2013, when we were selected as a pilot program for the state of Michigan. Each year the court is awarded funds (ranging from \$100,000-130,000) to cover the cost of the program. These include a full time case manager, contractual arrangements with therapist and vocational training, a part time drug screener, drug testing supplies, and reimbursement for travel.

Since initiating the program in May of 2013, Allegan County has accepted 119 participants for SSSPP. The program has had 38 participants complete and graduate from the program. Additionally, there have been 40 participants who have been unsuccessful and returned to court for re-sentencing.

As of April of 2018, we have 22 active participants and an impressive 100% are employed full time with the exception of two that are currently on medical disability. Of the 683 drug and alcohol tests administered in the seven months from October 2017 through March 2018, only 9 came back with positive results (1.3%). All of our participants are involved in counseling services. Additionally, the majority of participants are taking advantage of additional resources to improve their employability and vocational skills.

Allegan County Legal Assistance Center

The Allegan County Legal Assistance Center (*ACLAC*) opened its doors on July 31, 2012. As of April 2018, this nonprofit organization has served over **9,500** patrons, providing legal assistance to those who cannot afford an attorney to process their cases. 75% of the patrons have incomes of less than \$30,000 per year.

ACLAC provides and supports committed volunteers to educate litigants with the appropriate legal processes and procedures, offers access to proper tools and assists with paperwork, thereby more effectively accomplishing justice for all.

Services are free, and are available in the lower level of the courthouse on a first come, first served basis. *ACLAC* is staffed with volunteers who do not provide legal advice or represent patrons in court. Volunteers are trained and supervised by the Executive Director and a volunteer coordinator. These volunteers have come from within the community, undergraduate colleges, and law schools. The center is open four days a week (Monday through Thursdays from 8:30am-5:00pm). On average, the center serves more than 18 people per day, and is able to accommodate two volunteers at a time.

Patrons have been assisted in noncriminal matters, such as divorce, custody, parenting time, guardianship, adoptions, name change, obtaining personal protection orders, and more. The Courts have benefited tremendously from the work of this service. Court hearings have become more streamlined to addressing the necessary issues, and self-represented litigants have a better understanding of what is happening in the courtroom. The Court is also better able to anticipate what the litigants are looking for when the paperwork being filed is filled out properly and contains the support needed to address the issue. The clerk's office is also able to process paperwork more efficiently when documents are clearly titled, and served appropriately. The agency has also hosted three community trainings that are free and open to the public. These trainings have been on topics such as debt management, landlord tenant law, and personal protection orders.

ACLAC is a United Way Partner and has received funding from the Allegan County Community Foundation, the Delano Foundation, Michigan Legal Help, and individual donations. In addition to those funds, the agency organizes several fundraisers each year in addition to in-kind support from the County of Allegan.

The Center is served by a volunteer Board of Directors, with participation from the courts, the legal community, law enforcement and community members. The Board appreciates the support of the Allegan County Board of Commissioners and will continue to provide a unique and quality service to the community.

ALLEGAN COUNTY LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

Ages Report April 2017 – April 2018

From 04/01/2017 through 04/01/2018

Age Group	New Visitors per Age Group	Repeat Visitors	Total Visitors
Under 21	16	10	26
21 - 30	222	469	691
31 - 40	307	704	1011
41 - 50	215	382	597
51 - 60	179	212	391
Over 60	152	101	253
TOTAL:	1091	1878	2969

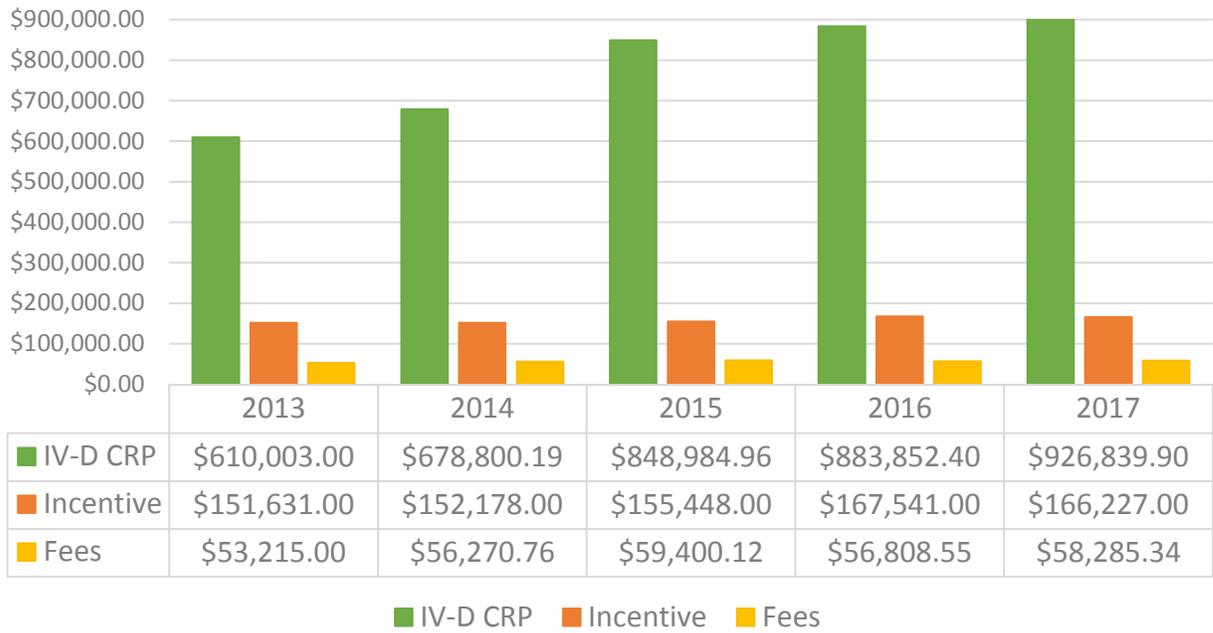


Allegan County Friend of the Court

The Friend of the Court office's Alternative Contempt Track (ACT) Program accepted its first participant on April 24, 2017. Between April 24, 2017 and December 31, 2017 there were 17 participants admitted into the program. Of those 17, 14 are in various stages of participation and the first successful participant completed the program in April 2018. Of the participants, 5 have child support orders in place while participating in the program and of those cases there has been \$8,188.58 paid through March 7, 2018. We have had 3 participants unsuccessfully discharged.

The FOC office has continued to go through several transition periods of hiring and training new employees. We will be facing our biggest transition with the retirement of the Friend of the Court, Michael J. Day during early 2018. His knowledge of the FOC will be irreplaceable and he will be missed. As with transitions in the past, the FOC office continues to meet or exceed all of the performance incentive factor goals presented through the Federal and State IV-D programs. The FOC team plans to continue to improve and embrace change.

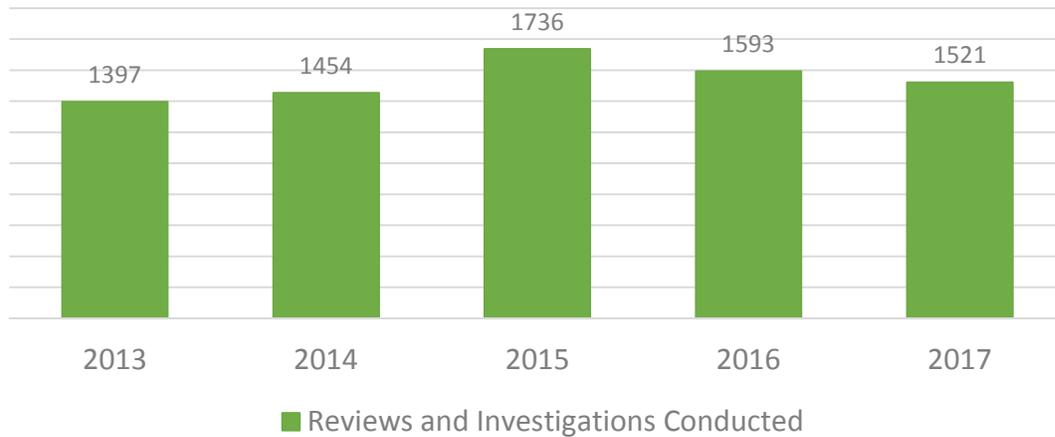
Allegan County FOC Revenues Generated



Revenues:

1. **IV-D CRP** reflects the revenue for IV-D services. It is the total amount 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 amount 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. **Fees** reflects the statutory collections allocated to the county general fund. It is the total amount for semiannual service fees, which is \$2.25 received by the county treasurer and not the service fees collected and sent to the state treasurer. MCL 600.2538(1).

Allegan County FOC Child Support Reviews and Investigations

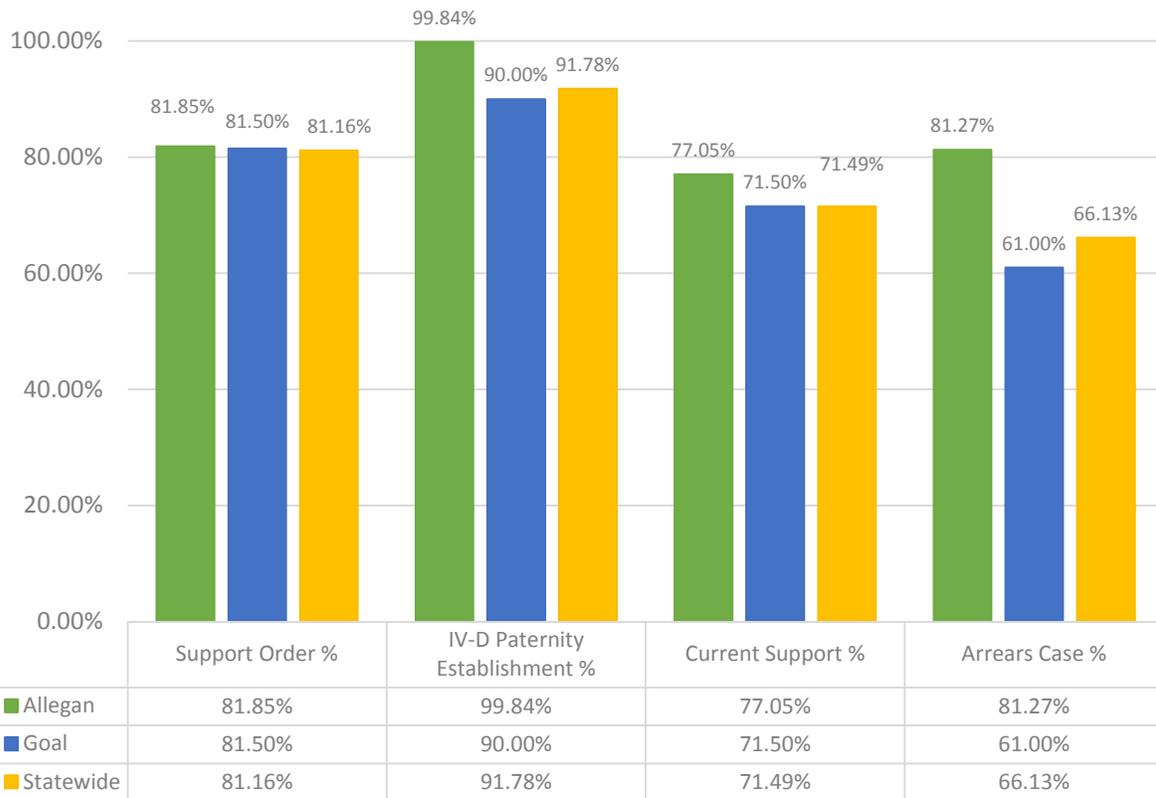


One of the main functions of the FOC office is to review child support and make recommendations to the Court regarding support amounts. In 2017, the FOC Review and Modification division conducted 476 statutory support reviews and an additional 147 support investigations. The Conciliator/Investigators conducted another 53 support investigations during custody and/or parenting time investigations. Every statutory review and investigation regarding the issue of child support also addresses the issue of medical support. The FOC conducted 845 medical support reviews and investigations. Ultimately, the FOC office handled 1521 support reviews and investigations, including medical support.

In addition to child support, the FOC office also conducts custody and parenting time investigations. In 2017, the Conciliator/Investigators conducted 53 custody and/or parenting time investigations. The recommendations resulting from an investigation evaluate the statutory “best interests” factors to help the Court decide what is in the best interest of a child and family for their custody and parenting time situation. The Conciliator/Investigators also conducted 209 Conciliation Conferences to help the Court establish temporary orders while a domestic case is pending.

The total open cases in the FOC office increased again for 2017. The office has 5022 open cases. This us up from 4961 last year.

Allegan County FOC Performance Incentive Factors

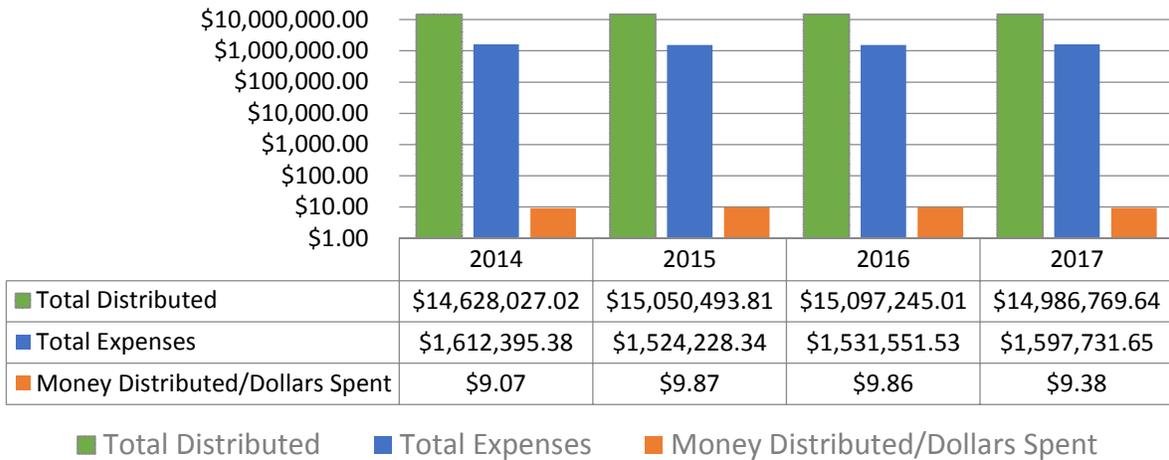


Again this year the FOC continues to meet or exceed the goals set forth by the state in every performance incentive factor category.

The above graph compares Allegan FOC to the statewide performance and also the goals for performance set forth by the state. Ultimately, each individual county FOC office needs to meet the goals in order for the state to maximize its incentive dollars, which are distributed to the counties.

These numbers are provided through a tracking system implemented by the state called the Dashboard. These numbers can be accessed through Business Objects in the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System

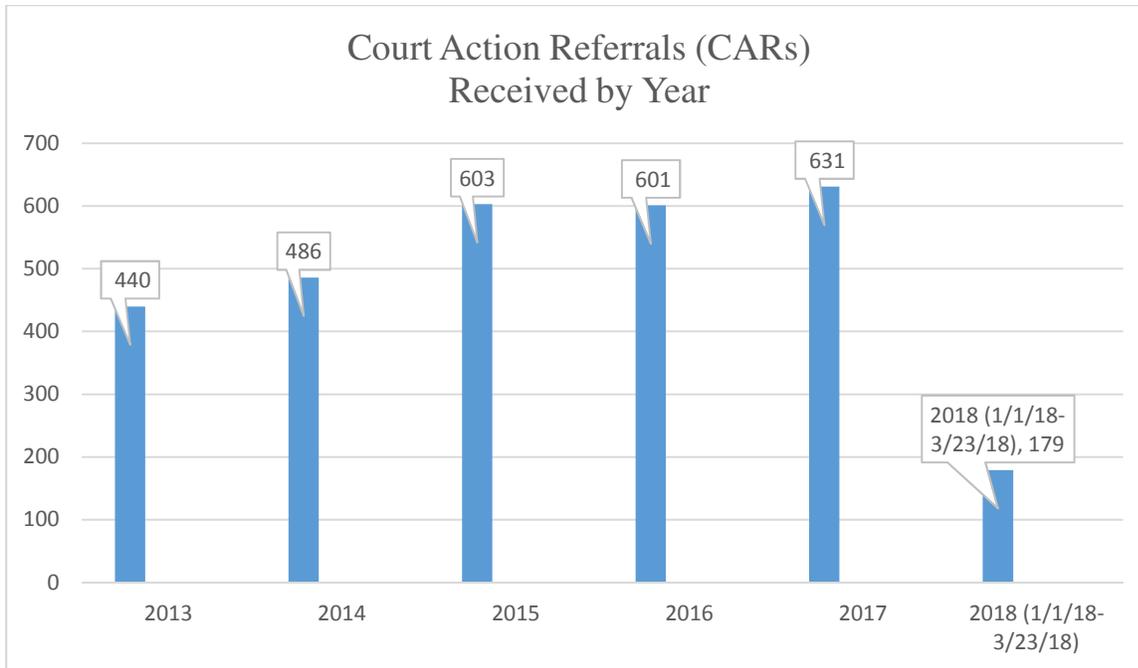
Allegan County FOC Total Support Distributed v. Total Expenses



For every dollar the FOC expends to perform daily tasks and functions there is over \$9.00 in support that is distributed.

The total amount of support distributed includes IV-D and non IV-D child support, IV-D and non IV-D spousal support, child care, ordinary medical expenses, extraordinary medical expenses, birthing costs, educational expenses, interstate payments, payer’s bonuses, and foster care payments collected.

The total expenses include the amount spent to perform IV-D and non IV-D functions, and expenses billed by offices or agencies outside the FOC office, for example, custody investigations and mediations performed by a human services agency.



The IV-D program is subject to new performance incentives pursuant to the contracts. These new measures are as follows:

- 1) 75 % of the referrals must be worked within 14 days,
- 2) 75% of cases must meet the federal expiration date for service, and
- 3) 75% of the cases must have a final order within 6 months.

In the fiscal year 2016-2017, the Establishment unit met these incentives as follows:

- 1) 99% of referrals worked within 14 days,
- 2) 100% of cases were served within the federal timeframe, and
- 3) 96% of cases had a final order within 6 months.

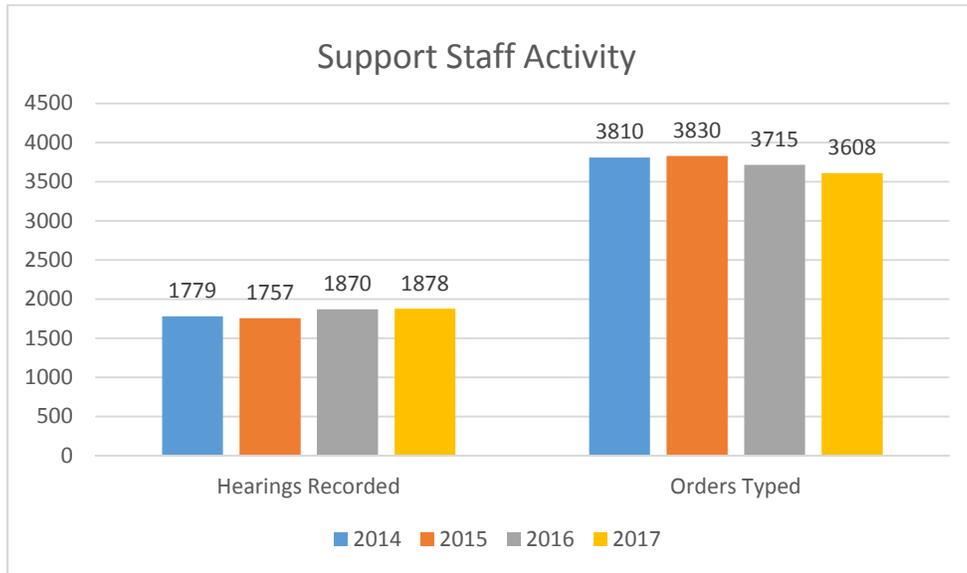


Circuit Court: Family Division

- **Judicial (Delinquency and Neglect/Abuse)**
- **CASA**
- **Juvenile Diversion**
- **Community Probation**
- **Community Justice, After Care**
- **Youth Home (Secure Detention)**
- **Cheever Treatment Center**



Family Court

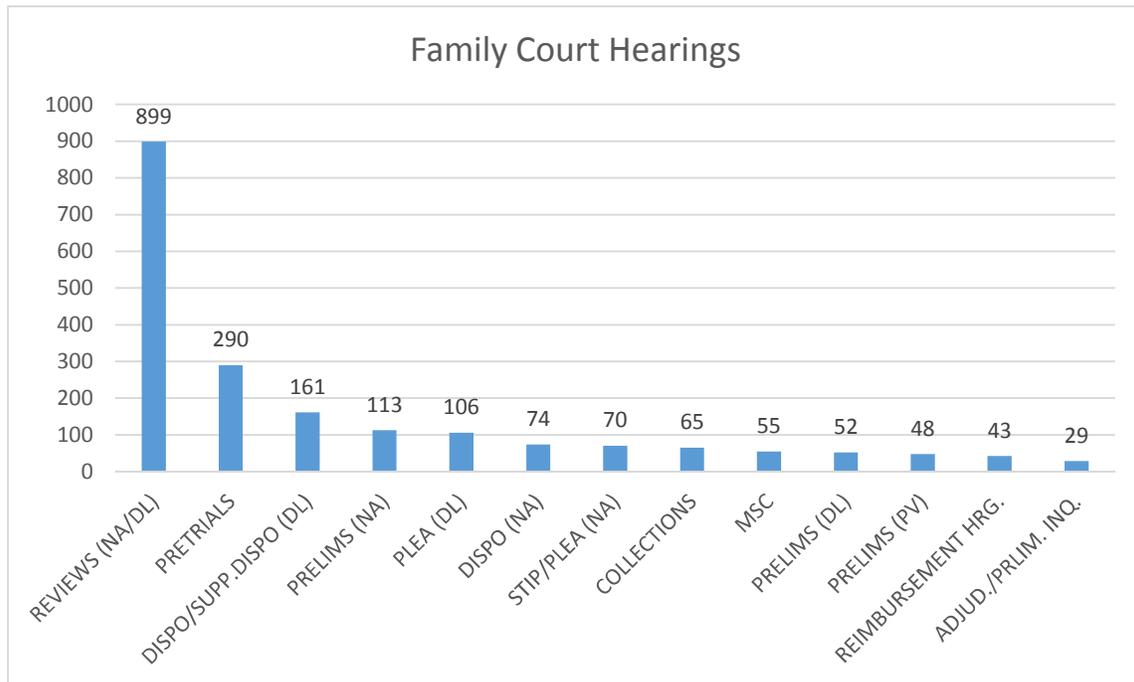


Much of the unseen work of the Court is handled by the support staff. The clerks and recorders are vital parts of the functioning of the Court. Activity for 2017 was essentially the same as it was for 2016. The Family Court has seen consistent numbers as far as activity in the past several years.

The support staff also performs duties such as: building probation field files and juvenile diversion files, scheduling hearings, answering phones, typing probation violation petitions, and tending the customer service window. The Court would have a difficult time meeting state mandated timelines without the great work of the support staff.



Most Common Family Court Hearings



The above chart summarizes the most common Family Court hearings by type of hearing. Of the 2120 total hearings held in 2017, 42% were review hearings, followed by 14% pre-trials, and thirdly 8% were disposition hearings. These hearings track the progress of active cases in the Court. Many times the review hearing process will prevent future problems with a case. With most of the combined 345 pre-trials and mandatory settlement conferences held, agreements are made that avoid scheduling of bench or jury trials. This helps greatly in keeping the Court docket available for all the hearings necessary during the course of the year.

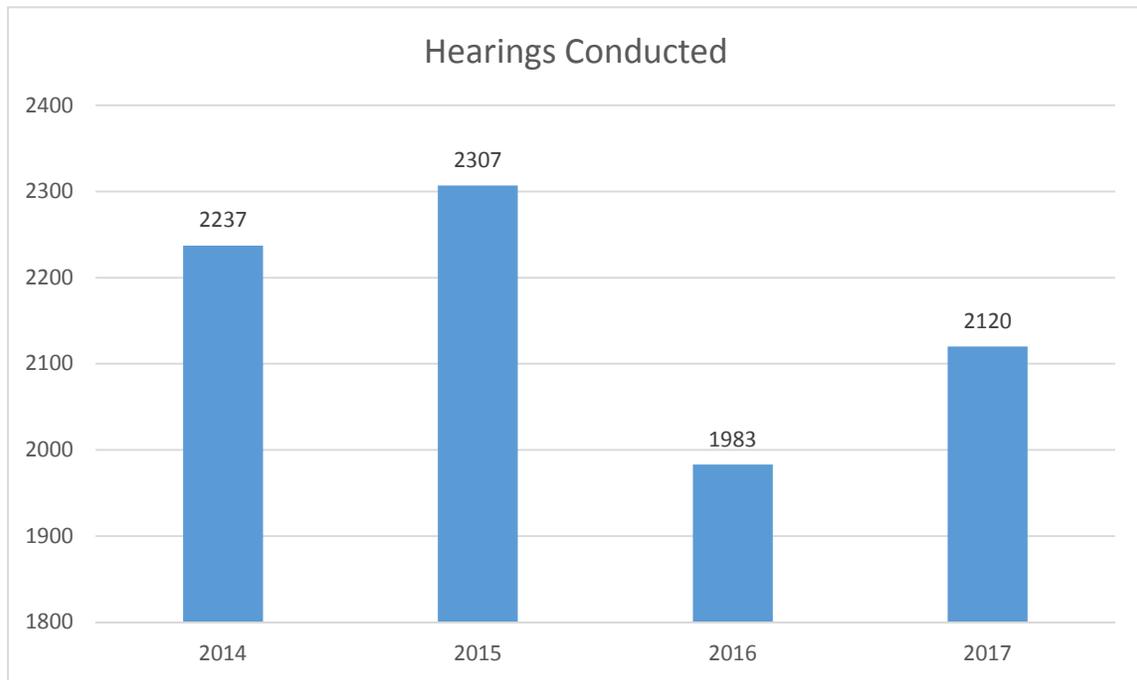
DL = Delinquency

NA = Neglect/Abuse.

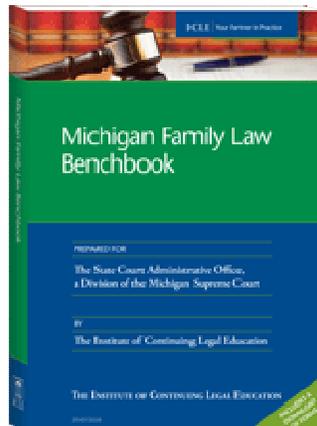
MSC = Mandatory Settlement Conference held between the attorney's with a referee in attendance



Family Court Hearings Conducted



Of the 2589 hearings scheduled in 2017, the family court conducted 2120 hearings. This is up from 2016 but down from the 2014 and 2015.



Court Appointed Special Advocates

CASA

The court contracts with *Safe Harbor Children's Advocacy Center* to provide CASA services for Neglect/Abuse children who have been removed from their homes. Safe Harbor provides the local 50% match to the Child Care Fund reimbursements of 50% from the state, meaning **zero** general fund dollars are needed to provide this important service to families. This contract began in 2013.

The year prior to the CASA contract with Safe Harbor, only 7 children received CASA volunteer services. In 2015, 44 children received support from Safe Harbor CASA volunteers and that number decreased to 29 in 2016, due to an increase in adoptions and reunifications throughout the calendar year. For 2017, numbers rose again and Safe Harbor serviced 34 youth.



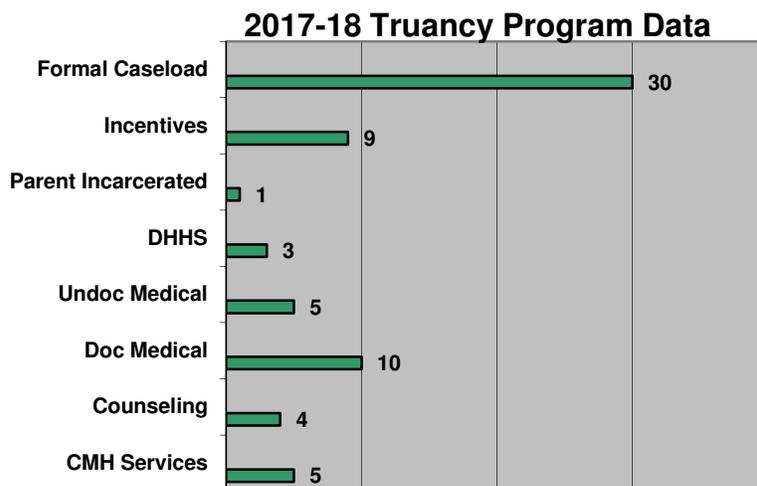
Community Probation and Juvenile Diversion

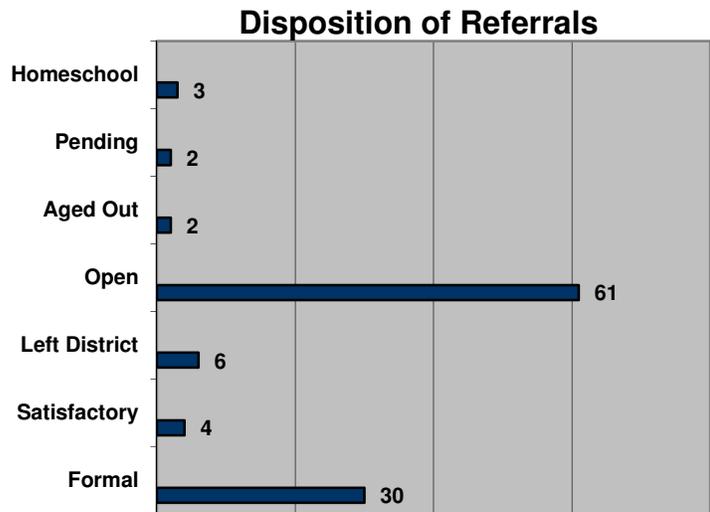
Direct Referral Truancy Diversion Program:

During the 2017-18 school year, the Direct Referral Truancy Diversion Program was expanded to include Martin Public Schools. The program is now in Allegan, Plainwell, Fennville, Hopkins, and Martin school districts. Over the course of the last year, the court has received 108 referrals for students in these districts who were at risk of becoming truant. Of those 108 referrals, 104 of those students were scheduled for meetings with parents, school officials, and court staff to attempt to identify barriers to school attendance and make necessary referrals for services intended to eliminate those barriers. As of the date of this report, only 2 meetings are pending.

In 65 cases, the student either completed the program satisfactorily or has an ongoing case. As of May 2018, 30 of those 108 cases went to the formal court docket, 4 of which were placed on the formal docket for new or additional charges. Of the remaining cases, 6 left the jurisdiction, 2 were beyond court jurisdiction at the time of the referral, and 3 were verified in an appropriate homeschool program. This means the program helped 99 families in our community resolve their issue with a truant child.

Overall, the program has been successfully received in participating districts. The Court hopes to continue expansion of the program into additional districts next year, with the hope of making the program county-wide in coming years. The program has successfully reduced communication barriers between the Court and schools and allowed for a community-wide dialogue on how to keep kids in school and the juvenile justice system.





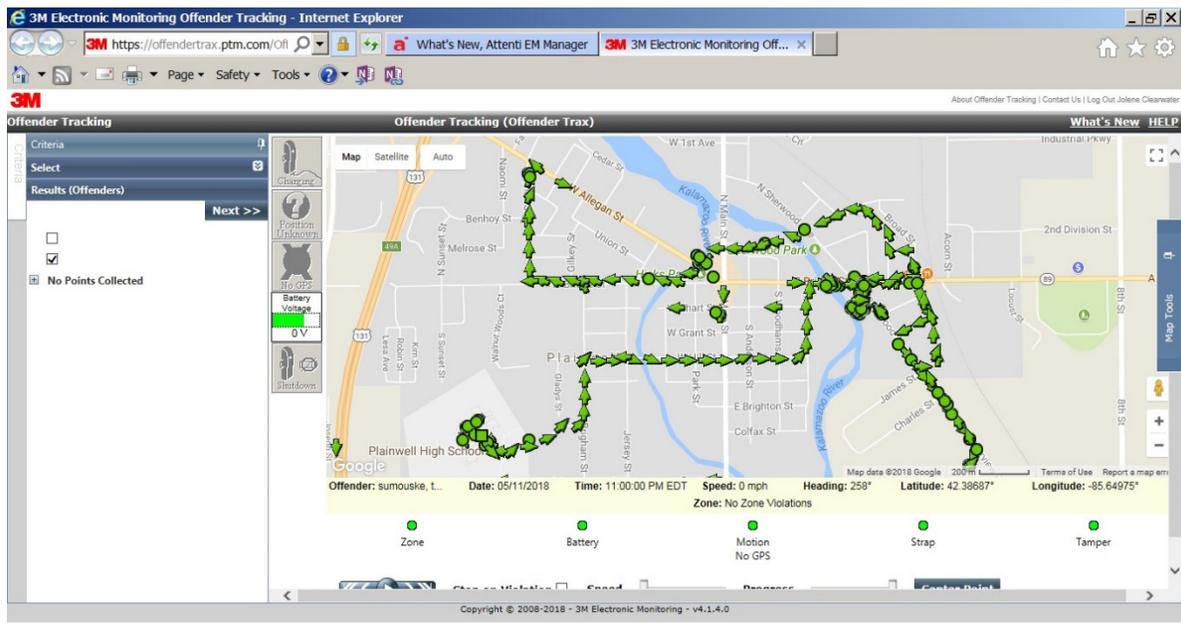
Gang Specialist Training:

In August of 2017, the Family Division send two staff members to the 20th International Gang Specialist Training Program, hosted by the National Gang Crime Research Center. Both staff completed the Basic Gang Specialist Program as well as an intensive certification program. Benjamin Schreur successfully completed the certification for “Gang and Violence Prevention for School Administrators” and Van Sloan completed the program for “Gang Problems in K-12 Schools”. Both of these tracks required an intensive 24 hours of training over the course of three days. Staff members were able to take what they learned and provide further training for probation staff regarding gang-related activity in court-involved youth.



Electronic Monitoring (Tethers):

The 48th Circuit Court Family Division partners with the Michigan Department of Corrections to provide electronic monitoring for court-involved juveniles. Every probation officer must undergo seven hours of intensive training to utilize the tether units. Each tether is serviced through 3M, and GPS data is utilized through local cell towers. Probation officers are able to track each juvenile through a web-interface that shows the location of each offender in an accurate and real-time delivery. The utilization of these tethers has allowed the Family Division to scale back on the use of detention in cases where a juvenile is a flight risk or requires enhanced supervision.



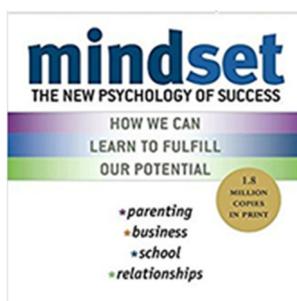
Secure Juvenile Detention

Overview:

The Allegan County Juvenile Detention center continues to provide a safe and secure environment for up to 22 pre and post adjudicated residents between the ages of 10-17. The goal of the program is to provide individualized assessments to rehabilitate and prevent further delinquent behavior through the development of educational, vocational, social, emotional and basic life skills which enable youth to grow and mature. Given the average length of stay is 20 days this is a real challenge. To help with that challenge the juvenile center uses a web-based case management system for daily programming, medical services, facility security, and resident reports. The system provides an easy way to quickly and efficiently alert other court personnel about resident concerns. This is particularly important when youth move between secure detention and residential treatment; the staff can very quickly update themselves on all significant issues which could impact progress.

Youth entering detention can spend as little time as a few hours up to several months. The average age at the time of placement is 15 and the average length of stay is 20 days. The facility holds pre and post adjudicated youth between the ages of 10-17. Once a youth enters the facility the programming/and coaching begins. The detention team works on meeting the youth where “they are at” in terms of skill level and building on that foundation. The level of compliance and respect is challenged immediately by providing written and verbal expectations.

The detention team has recently completed a book study on *The Growth Mindset* by Dr. Carol Dweck. Dr. Dweck shows how success in school, work, sports, the arts, and almost every area of human endeavor can be dramatically influenced by how we think about our talents and abilities. People with a *fixed mindset*—those who believe that abilities are fixed—are less likely to flourish than those with a *growth mindset*—those who believe that abilities can be developed. Meeting once weekly in small groups for six weeks staff dissected each chapter and discussed how the principals of a “growth mindset” can be applied in the detention center with the youth and staff. Introducing a growth mindset given the frequent turnover with our population, the detention team is committed to have each youth leave our facility with a skill they did not possess when admitted. For our short term residents a few examples of these skills include; how to properly address an envelope, how to make a bed, how to use proper meal manners, how to wash dishes, how to do laundry, how to mop a floor. For our longer term youth participation in groups such as the “Why Try” groups, Book Club group, Music Therapy and Art Therapy exposes the youth to an “unplugged” lifestyle and gives us hope that youth leaving our facility will have gained an appreciation for the possibilities if they allow themselves to be open to a “growth mindset.”



The following was written by one of our female residents and is a good example of someone coming to us with a very “fixed” or “closed” mindset, but leaving in a much better place. Her first stay she spent 32 days in detention. She was admitted as the result of a pick-up order and presented with significant substance abuse issues. When she was admitted she was under weight and looked unhealthy and unkempt. By the time she was released she was smiling, happy and carried herself as a confident young woman. She connected with our Why Try groups, Book Club groups, Music Therapy and Pottery class. This young lady enjoyed journaling and, therefore, was asked to share her thoughts about her stay in detention.

December 9, 2017: “I arrived at the Allegan County Juvenile Detention Center, around 2:00 a.m. Coming here obviously drenched me with sorrow. My life at that point was a mess. I was detoxing, and was not even close to being myself anymore. When a staff member handed me a book to read I completely “lost it” and had no interest what so ever. Which wasn’t the person I was. I had loved reading, I always had. I never refused books even if they looked boring to me. I was just always a big reader. But, that warm fuzzy feeling wasn’t there anymore. That urge to read was just completely gone. I felt bored, as if I didn’t care, I didn’t care about anything myself or others. I was lost in a black hole of destruction. All of that momentum I had, had washed off the surface of the earth. After a few days went by, and I started becoming sober, I felt a feeling I haven’t felt in a long, long time. It was me, me being myself again. I wasn’t all the way there yet, but I still felt it all coming within me. Getting to that stage, made me realize something. It’s not so bad being sober, and what was I thinking before? Why did I never realize this? Why did I make these stupid decisions? What was I even doing right now? I hadn’t even felt this way since before my mom was diagnosed with cancer, since I was about 12years old. I knew that I was in a dark place at the moment. Something that wasn’t good for me, or my future. I needed to turn it all around and get back on the path of success. I am now 16 I will be 17 in less than a month. But, as of now, before I came here, me smiling wasn’t a thing. Unless, I was with my friends or using substances at that point. I couldn’t even come to lifting myself back up again. I kept falling so far down, it was just too hard for me to get back up. I had become weak. Every bit of happiness I had ever had was just gone. The moment I picked up a book and really allowed myself to “feel” what I was reading my life changed. I started reading book after book. It made me feel original. Like back in 4th grade, when I used to read scary books and fairy tales about love and fantasies. Here, I started reading books in less than a week, which then turned into only taking me a few days to read a 300 plus page book. It was extraordinary. I went on to another and another. My dad would come for visitations noticing my reading. I would sit there and tell him all about the books I had just finished and why I liked them so much. He would come in bringing two to three books at a time. I loved it. Especially, because he knew my taste in books. It set off a spark in me. I was enjoying reading books again like when I was a kid! I remembered how it felt and why I use to read so much before. I loved reading all of my favorite authors and picturing images in my head of what would happen next, just to keep me thrilling about it. My whole world had turned around once I started reading books again. I wouldn’t be who I am at this very moment in time if I didn’t pick up that first book when I arrived here. I am so happy I made a “right” decision for my life which changed everything, thanks to the Detention Center.”

Programing: *All day every day*

- **Art Therapy**

In 2017, art therapy was introduced under the instruction of Jeff Blandford (Jeff Blandford Gallery in Saugatuck) What began as a 8 week pilot program has turned into an integral part of our program meeting weekly September through May. Youth are creating beautiful art and building empathy by sharing with others less fortunate.

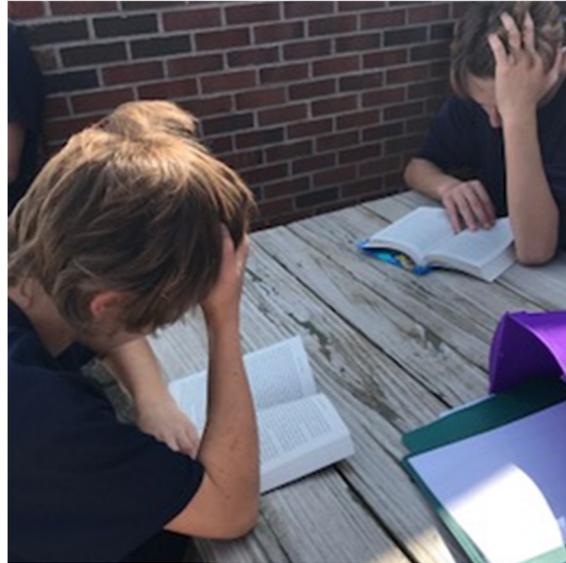


Jeff promoted a fundraiser to help sustain our program by opening his gallery for our work. Some of that money was used to purchase flowers for vases made by the youth and were delivered to the Medical Care facility.



- **Reading Program**

“Reading gives us some place to go when we have to stay where we are”
~ Mason Cooley

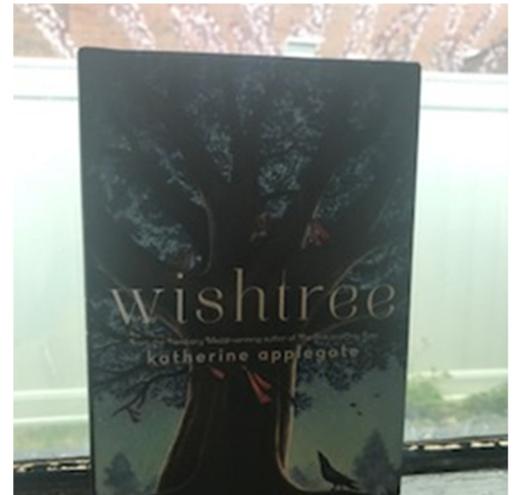
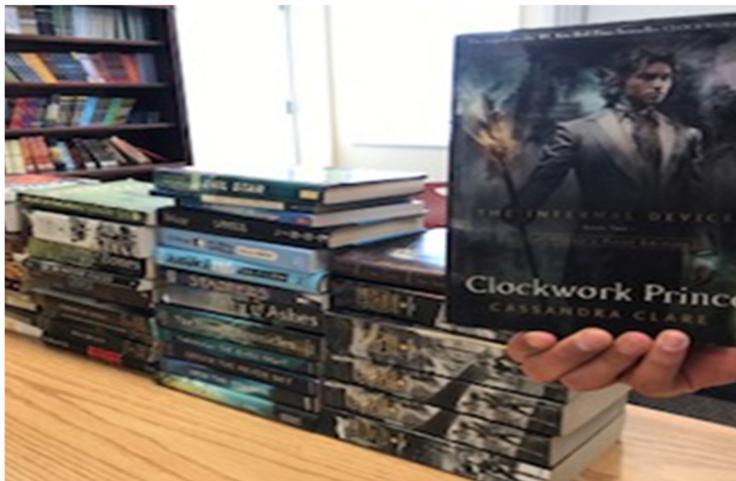


Staff and youth meet daily in small groups everyone takes turns reading the same book, books are discussed and youth write reports for each book. An average week will consist of 7-10 hours of guided reading time.





(Above) This 16 year old reluctant reader demonstrated tremendous growth in reading. Testing at grade 4 when admitted and at the time of release testing at grade 8. This picture is an example of the books he read independently and in book club.



- **Reading Program: Demonstrating Growth**

In 2017—50 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 of 30 days following admission giving us a clear indication of growth.

Grade	Reading level at admission	Reading level at release
8th	4th	7th
8th	6th	9th
8th	4th	11th
8th	5th	11th
8th	9th	11th
8th	6th	9th
9th	5th	6th
9th	7th	9th
9th	5th	11th
9th	7th	11th
9th	6th	11th
9th	5th	10th
9th	5th	9th
9th	4th	11th
9th	10th	11th
9th	5th	8th
9th	6th	10th
9th	4th	8th

Detention Statistics:

2017

Admissions	Out of County	Revenue from Out of County	Number of Males	Number of Females	GED Completion	Average Length of Stay
286	143	\$298,480.35	212	74	11	20 days

2016

Admissions	Out of County	Revenue from Out of County	Number of Males	Number of Females	GED Completion	Average Length of Stay
280	185	\$300,752.17	255	55	10	20 days

2017 Age at Admission

AGE	Number of Youth
10	1
11	2
12	15
13	22
14	47
15	103
16	86
17	10

2016 Age at Admission

AGE	Number of Youth
10	5
11	5
12	18
13	25
14	66
15	72
16	76
17	11
18	1
19	1

2017 Male Demographics

Bi-Racial	28
Black	34
Caucasian	128
Hispanic	21
Indian	1

2016 Male Demographics

Bi-Racial	21
Black	19
Caucasian	212
Hispanic	25
Indian	3



ACCOUNTABILITY



**COMPETENCY
DEVELOPMENT**



**COMMUNITY
SAFETY**

Cheever Treatment Center



Broadening our outlook one step at a time on the Appalachian Trail!

2018 Resident Overview

The Cheever Treatment Center (CTC) has served 37 residents this past year from the ages of 13–18. All of these youth have been determined by the court to be a risk to the community.

Of these youth one third have been identified as being on the Autism Spectrum and/or suspected brain damage due to the mother’s substance abuse during pregnancy.

Two thirds of the residents have a mental illness requiring psychotropic medications.

100% of the residents have a history of complex trauma.

These experiences have led to social maladjustment, poor problem solving, victim thinking, a sense of entitlement, anger, and depression. Having these issues it is easy to predict that they will struggle in school, at home and in the community.

Strategies

Our first mission at the Cheever Treatment Center is to provide a safe and structured environment. When it is safe we can create a learning environment where the youth can learn and practice being accountable and productive.

Every resident is assigned a team that assesses the strengths and needs of the resident and the family. Based on this, the team develops goals for the resident and their parents that the court believes will lead to improved and productive functioning in the community.

Residents demonstrating new skills are given the opportunity to spend time at home to practice the new skills. Staff have regular meetings in the family’s home to provide instruction and support. Surveillance is provided while the resident is home to increase community safety and have them work on their goals during the home pass.

Learning Opportunities



Learning Opportunities

Focus Group (Choice Theory teaching)

The residents ordered into CTC consistently struggle with relationships in their lives. These relationships typically are with parents, family members, school teachers, community members, and peers. In teaching the residents Choice Theory through Focus group our goal is to have them understand what they control in order to have more effective relationships in their lives. William Glasser's question of: "Is what I'm about to do or say going to move me closer to or further away from this person?" is the evaluation we hope our residents ask themselves in every interaction.

Balanced and Restorative Justice Group (BARJ)

The learning process of BARJ involves three components of teaching. The first component is Accountability. Each resident learns what accountability is along with expressing accountability for their behavior choices in the past. This involves describing in detail what they did, who was harmed in this incident, and what harm each person experienced. The second component is Competency Development. This involves the residents learning new skills to assist them in choosing more effective behaviors. The residents look at what positive behaviors would replace the harmful behaviors. They identify specific examples from their lives with regard to using these new positive behaviors and the effect this is having in their relationships. The third component is Community Safety. In this area the residents identify the behaviors that will have them living safely in the community. The residents returning home commit to these new behaviors and are demonstrating this commitment through their behaviors.

Substance Abuse Group (SAG)

Our residents are between the ages of 13-17. Many of them started using illegal substances prior to entering care. SAG group is designed to be an educational experience. The process creates opportunities for them to learn how harmful illegal substances are, what effect they have on the brain, and lifelong issues created through long-term use. The goal is that residents will apply this new knowledge in their lives' when making decisions about future use.





Leadership Academy

Our leadership academy is focused on our residents learning how to be effective leaders. We utilize classroom teaching of leadership traits; physical fitness through weight lifting, running, and swimming; experiential trips backpacking and rock climbing. Our hope is the teaching of the leadership traits is demonstrated during workouts and longer trip experiences.

Music Therapy

For adolescents struggling with mental health issues and trauma, music therapy provides a unique opportunity for self-expression. The residents focus on sharing their lives through music. Once a week the residents work with a music therapist to express themselves in song.



Pottery Experiential Learning

For adolescents struggling with mental health issues and trauma, pottery experiential learning provides a unique opportunity for self-expression. The residents speak through art. They are able to express thoughts and feelings by utilizing their hands.



Community Service

The relationship our residents have with the greater community is important. The opinion our residents have of the greater community along with the greater communities' opinion of our residents creates an opportunity for healing on both sides to begin. Taking advantage of real life service opportunities provides the foundation. Our residents serve the greater community through adopt a highway, adopt a beach, working with the [Allegan County Resource Center](#) assisting in projects for the elderly, cereal drive for schools in Allegan County, back to school drive in Allegan County, and Christmas toy drive in Allegan County, just to name a few.



The Cheever Staff thank you for the opportunity to work with the youth of Allegan County!