

Judicial Administration Program Area Summary

Overview

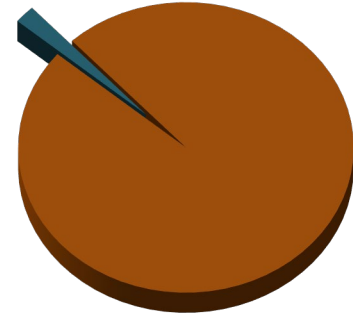
The four agencies in this program area: Circuit Court and Records, Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, General District Court, and the Office of the Sheriff, are all dedicated to providing equal access for the fair and timely resolution of court cases. High workloads continue to challenge each of the agencies in the Judicial Administration program area. These workloads require each of the affected agencies to find ways to leverage limited resources in the face of increasing demands, largely due to the growing population.

The Circuit Court is a Virginia "court of record" and has jurisdiction over Criminal and Civil cases and has appellate, de novo review over several lower courts and tribunals. Criminal cases involve a possible sentence to the State Penitentiary and misdemeanor appeals. Civil jurisdiction provides for adoptions, divorces, and controversies where the claim exceeds \$25,000. Public services include issuance of marriage licenses, processing notary commissions, probating wills, recording business certification of trade names, financing statements, and docketing judgments. The Circuit Court collects recordation taxes and filing fees as well as fines, costs, and restitution in Criminal cases. Public access of court records is available on site or through the Court's Public Access Network (CPAN), a secure remote access system.

The Commonwealth's Attorney is a constitutional officer of the Commonwealth of Virginia. As such, he is not an officer or employee of the County from which he was elected. In this jurisdiction, the Commonwealth's Attorney is elected by voters of Fairfax City and Fairfax County. The Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney (OCA) is charged primarily with the prosecution of crime. This office prosecutes criminal and traffic matters in the Fairfax County General District Court, criminal and delinquency matters in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, and all felony cases in the Fairfax County Circuit Court. The office handles both the violation of County ordinances and the violation of state statutes. The caseload of the office is substantial and is one of the highest per prosecutor in the Commonwealth. The OCA handles felony offenses such as murder, rape and other sexual assaults, robbery, burglary, and crimes against children, from arrest to trial. It prosecutes a variety of misdemeanor cases including driving while intoxicated violations and traffic fatality cases.

The General District Court (GDC) operates under the administrative guidance of the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Committee on District Courts. It administers justice in the matters before the Court. The Court's operations include the County Court Services Division and the State Clerk's Office. The General District Court is part of the judicial branch of the state government and its clerical office staff is almost entirely state-funded. The Court Services Division (CSD), however, is primarily County-funded. The CSD collects and provides information on incarcerated defendants to assist judges and magistrates with release decisions, provides pretrial community supervision to defendants awaiting trial, and supplies probation services to convicted misdemeanants and convicted non-violent felons (Class 5 and Class 6). The CSD also manages court-appointed counsel and interpretation services and provides pretrial adult supervision services to the Circuit Court and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court (JDRDC).

Judicial Administration



County General Fund Disbursements

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The Office of the Sheriff falls under two program areas – Judicial Administration and Public Safety. The main focus under Judicial Administration is the security of courtrooms and County courthouse and the service of legal process which contributes to the swift and impartial adjudication of all criminal and civil matters brought before the courts. The court caseloads in the Fairfax County judicial system have experienced steady growth over the years. This number temporarily decreased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which affected FY 2021 actuals. In FY 2022, there were 203,233 court cases heard. The Sheriff's Office will continue to ensure that there is no corresponding increase in security risks and will continue to provide the highest degree of safety to the residents of Fairfax County.

Program Area Summary by Category

Category	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Adopted	FY 2023 Revised	FY 2024 Advertised
FUNDING				
Expenditures:				
Personnel Services	\$37,425,141	\$41,713,099	\$41,960,107	\$44,092,800
Operating Expenses	8,451,702	7,602,132	10,824,033	7,776,338
Capital Equipment	727,838	0	48,797	0
Total Expenditures	\$46,604,681	\$49,315,231	\$52,832,937	\$51,869,138
Income	\$16,192,915	\$16,299,890	\$15,075,915	\$15,621,120
NET COST TO THE COUNTY	\$30,411,766	\$33,015,341	\$37,757,022	\$36,248,018
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)				
Regular	436 / 435.5	437 / 436.5	439 / 438.5	440 / 439.5
Exempt	30 / 30	30 / 30	30 / 30	30 / 30
State	214 / 211	214 / 211	227 / 224	227 / 224

Program Area Summary by Agency

Agency	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Adopted	FY 2023 Revised	FY 2024 Advertised
Circuit Court and Records	\$12,873,323	\$13,429,813	\$13,483,498	\$14,030,519
Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney	7,118,573	8,458,241	9,939,028	8,762,687
General District Court	4,276,539	5,454,939	6,006,323	6,114,358
Office of the Sheriff	22,336,246	21,972,238	23,404,088	22,961,574
Total Expenditures	\$46,604,681	\$49,315,231	\$52,832,937	\$51,869,138

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Budget Trends

The FY 2024 Advertised Budget Plan funding level of \$51,869,138 for the Judicial Administration program area comprises 2.8 percent of the total General Fund Direct Expenditures of \$1,859,558,977. In FY 2024, Judicial Administration program area expenditures increased by \$2,553,907, or 5.2 percent, over the FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan total of \$49,315,231. This increase is primarily attributable to a 2.00 percent market rate adjustment (MRA) for all employees effective July 2023; an additional Probate Clerk position to support the Probate Division of the Fairfax County Circuit Court; and increases to state salary supplements as a result of State compensation increases.

The Judicial Administration program area includes 470 positions (not including state positions), an increase of 1/1.0 FTE position over the *FY 2023 Revised Budget Plan* level. The additional 1/1.0 FTE position is included to support the Probate Division of the Fairfax County Circuit Court.

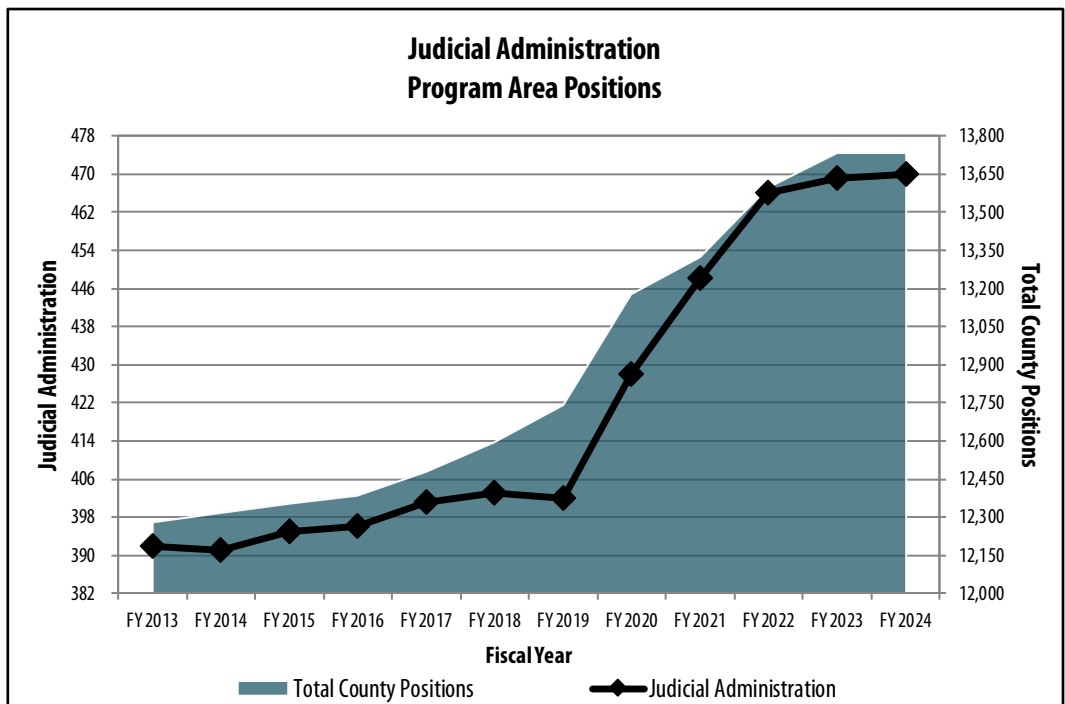
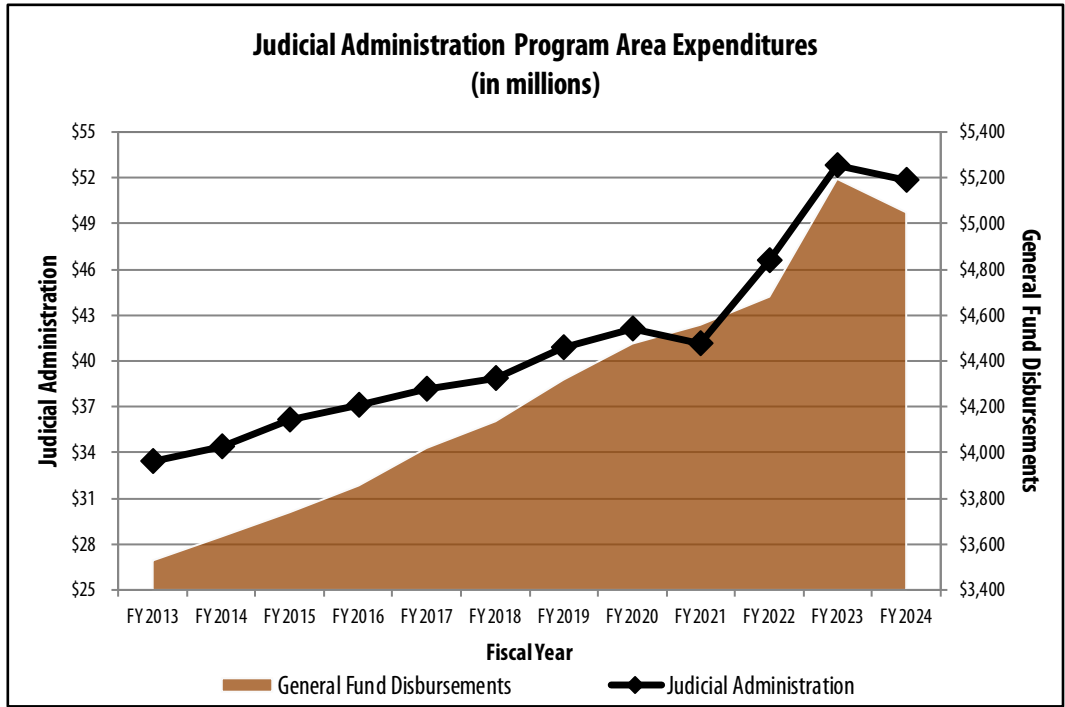
One Fairfax Impact

The agencies in the Judicial Administration Program Area promote racial and social equity by providing an independent, accessible, responsive forum for the just resolution of disputes in order to preserve the rule of law and to protect all rights and liberties guaranteed by the United States and Virginia Constitutions, and by building trust within the community and serving all those encountered equitably.

The following charts illustrate funding and position trends for the agencies in this program area compared to countywide expenditure and position trends.

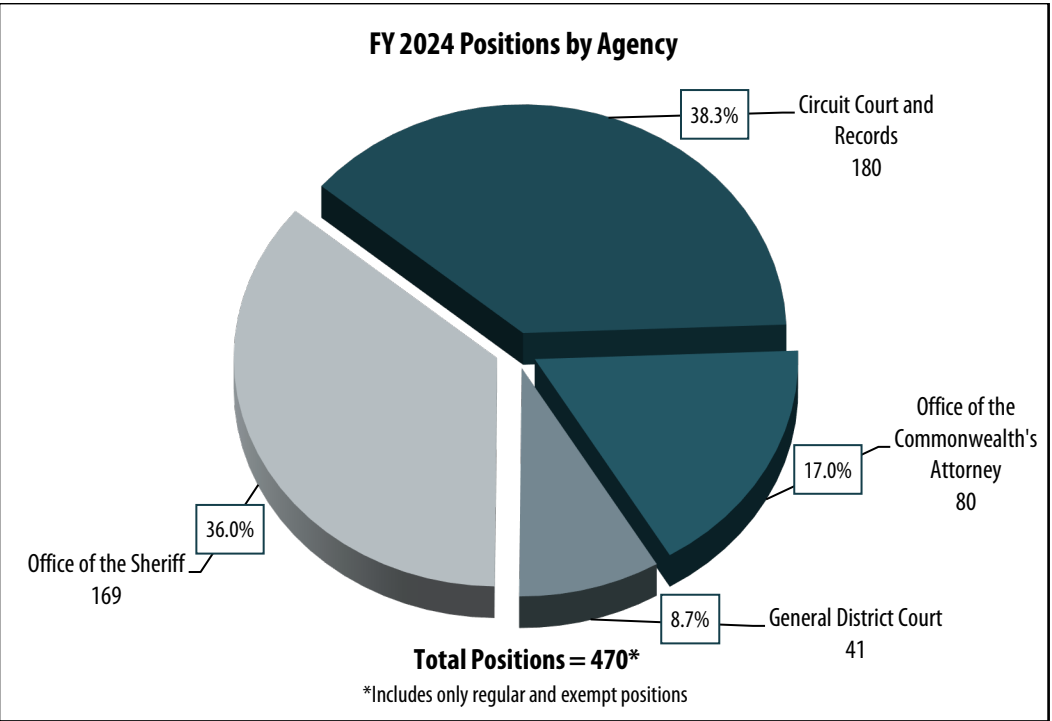
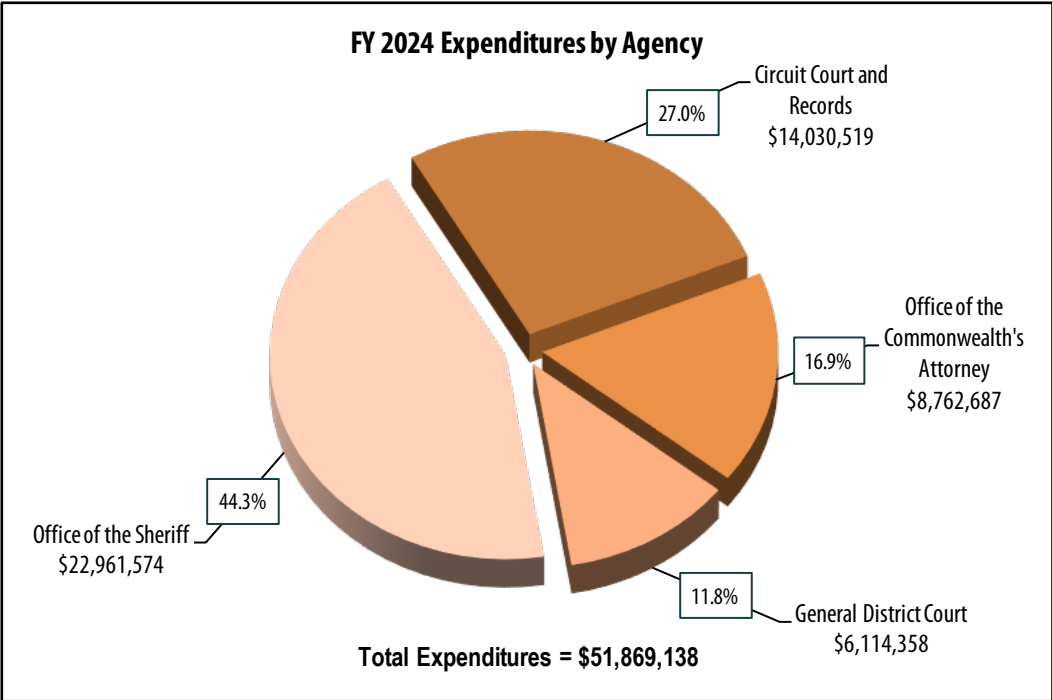
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Trends in Expenditures and Positions



Judicial Administration Program Area Summary

Expenditures and Positions by Agency



Benchmarking

Since the FY 2005 Budget, benchmarking data has been included in the annual budget as a means of demonstrating accountability to the public for results achieved. Data is included in each of the Program Area Summaries in Volume 1 (General Fund) and now in Volume 2 (Other Funds) as available. The Countywide Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in October 2021 and will be continuously integrated into the budget preparation and decision-making process through the identification of an initial set of headline metrics. Performance measurement and benchmarking programs will continue to be updated to align data gathering, utilization, and presentation across the organization with these new headline metrics.

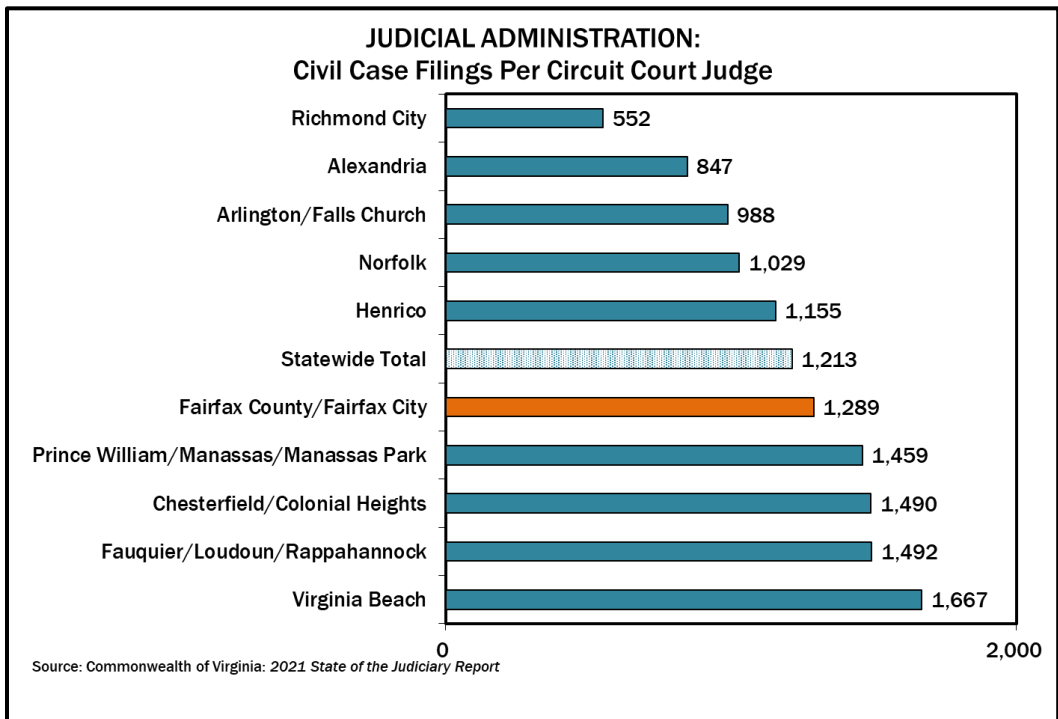
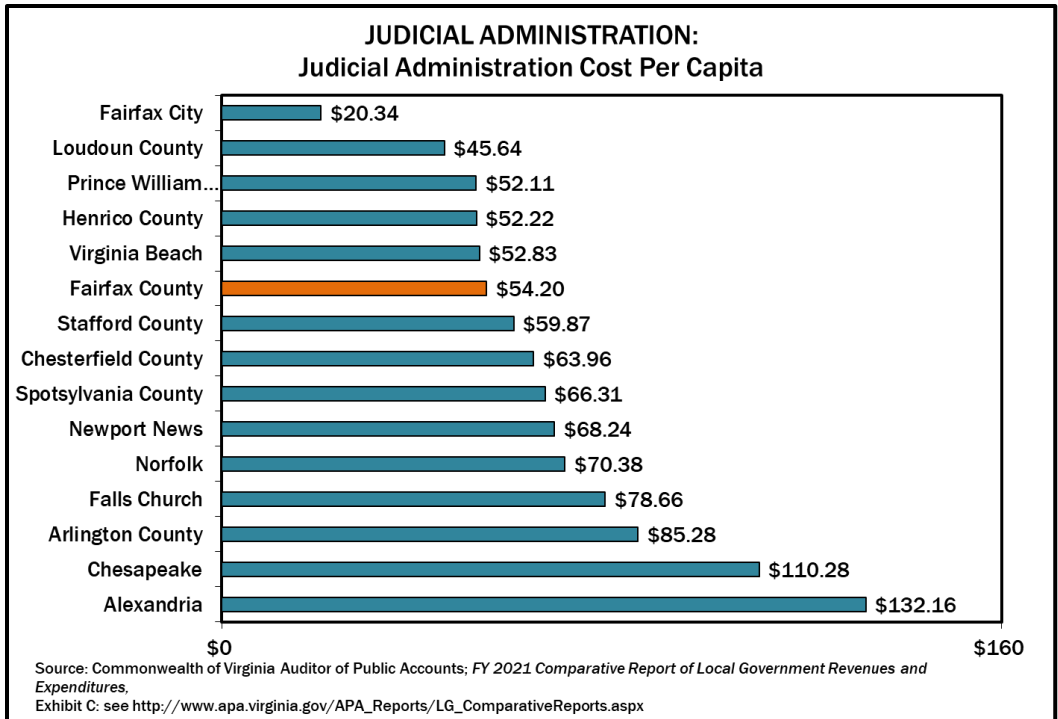
Data collected by the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) for the Commonwealth of Virginia are included here as well. Again, due to the time necessary for data collection and cleaning, FY 2021 represents the most recent year for which data is available. An advantage to including these benchmarks is the comparability. In Virginia, local governments follow stringent guidelines regarding the classification of program area expenses. Cost data is provided annually to the APA for review and compilation in an annual report. Since this data is not prepared by any one jurisdiction, its objectivity is less questionable than if collected by one of the participants. In addition, a standard methodology is consistently followed, allowing comparison over time. For each of the program areas, these comparisons of cost per capita are the first benchmarks shown in these sections.

Data from the State Supreme Court's annual "State of the Judiciary" report is also included. The most recent report available is for Calendar Year 2021. The link for the 2021 "State of the Judiciary" report is located within the Appendix Trial Court Caseload Statistics:

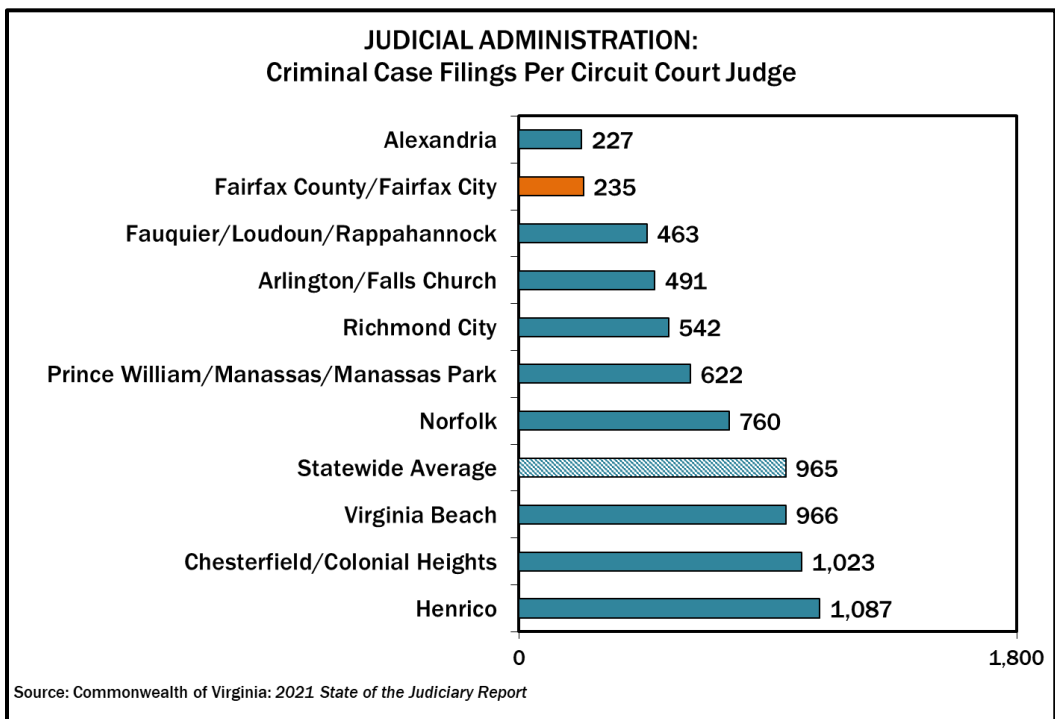
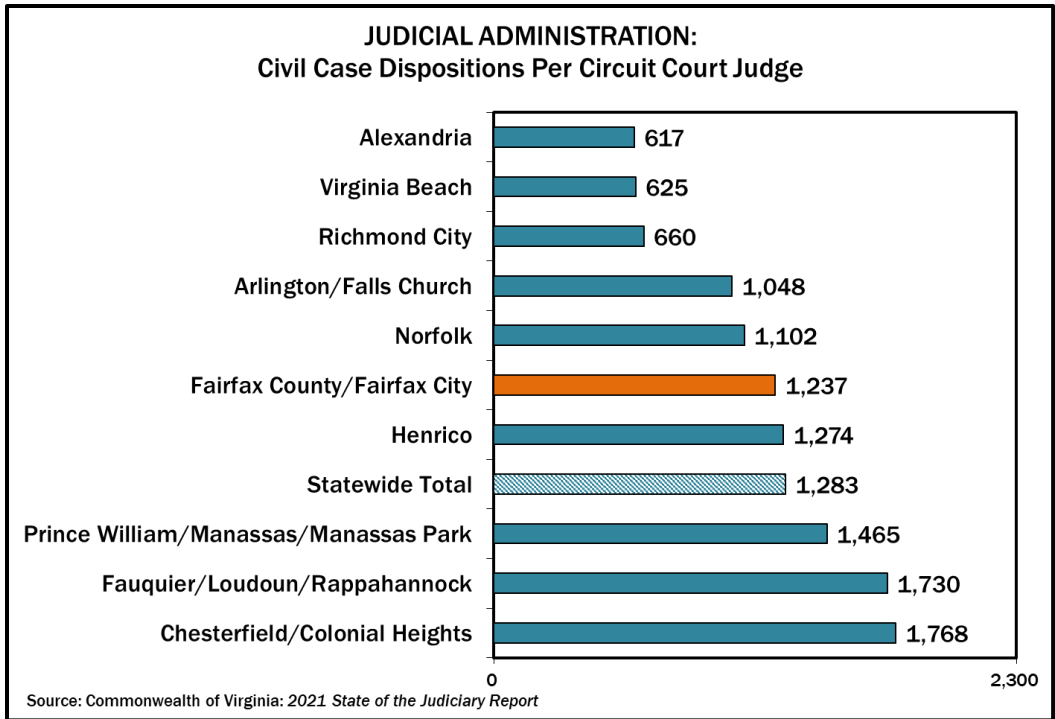
[Virginia State of the Judiciary Report 2021](#)

The metrics published in the *2021 State of the Judiciary Report* of the Commonwealth of Virginia focus on filings and dispositions. In the most general sense, a filing is the initiation of a legal action with the court through a carefully prescribed legal procedure. The procedure used to count filings for the *State of the Judiciary Report* follows a set of rules consistent with national standards for statistical reporting. These rules differ according to case type, ranging from civil cases to criminal cases to juvenile cases. In a general sense, a disposition may be described as a final settlement or determination in a case. A disposition may occur either before or after a civil or criminal case has been scheduled for trial. A final judgment, a dismissal of a case, and the sentencing of a criminal defendant are all examples of dispositions.

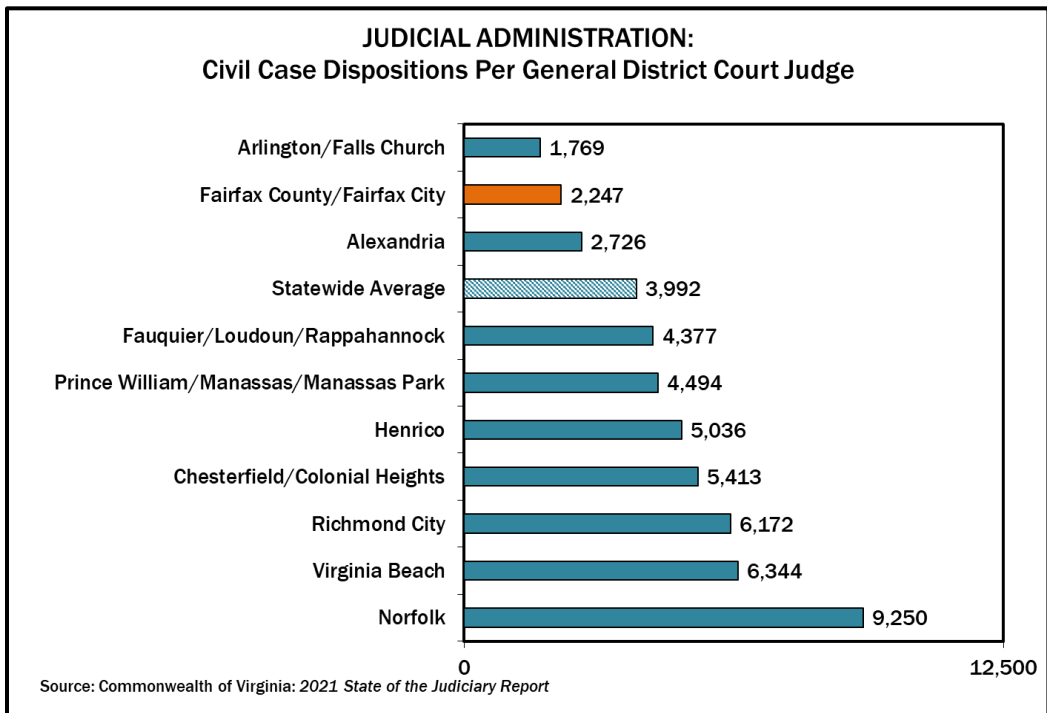
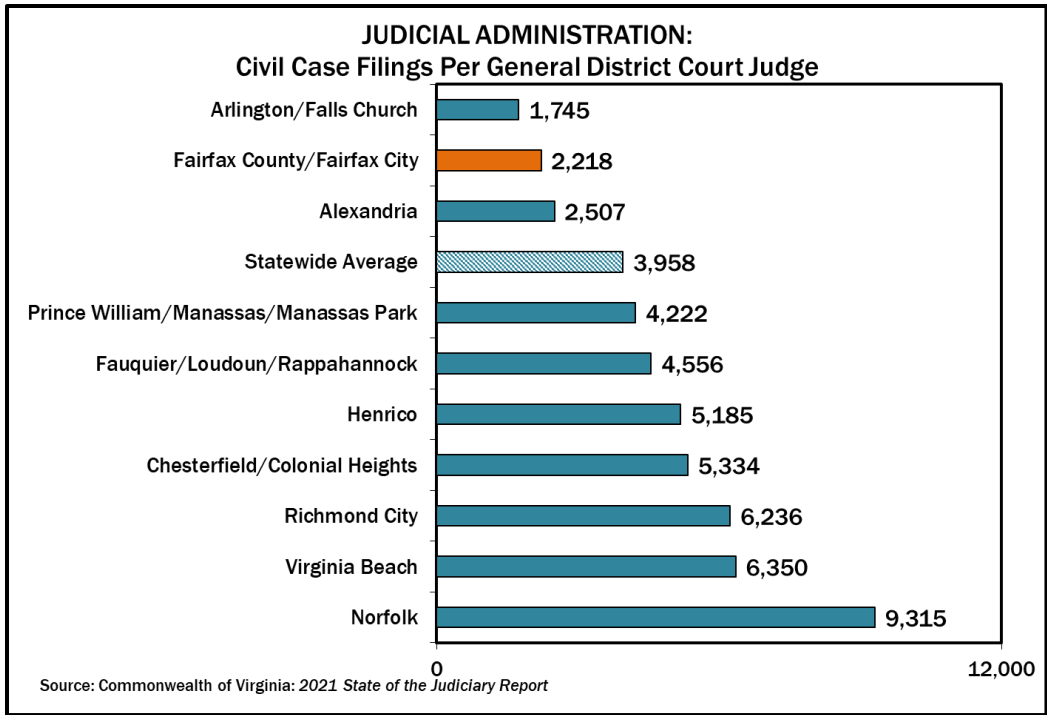
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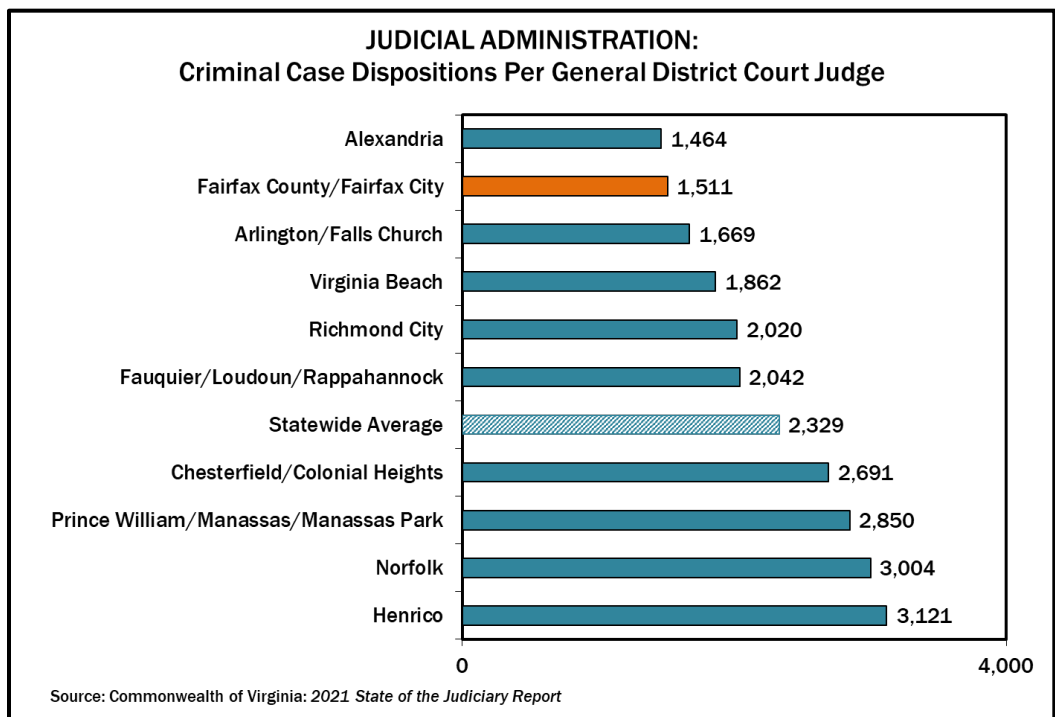
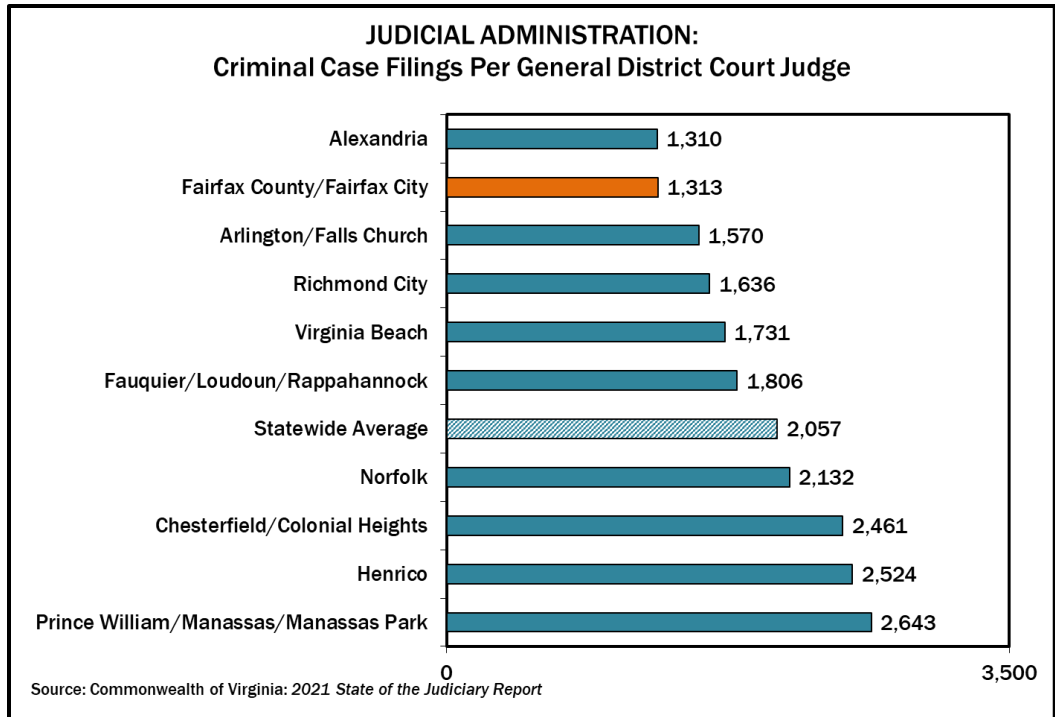
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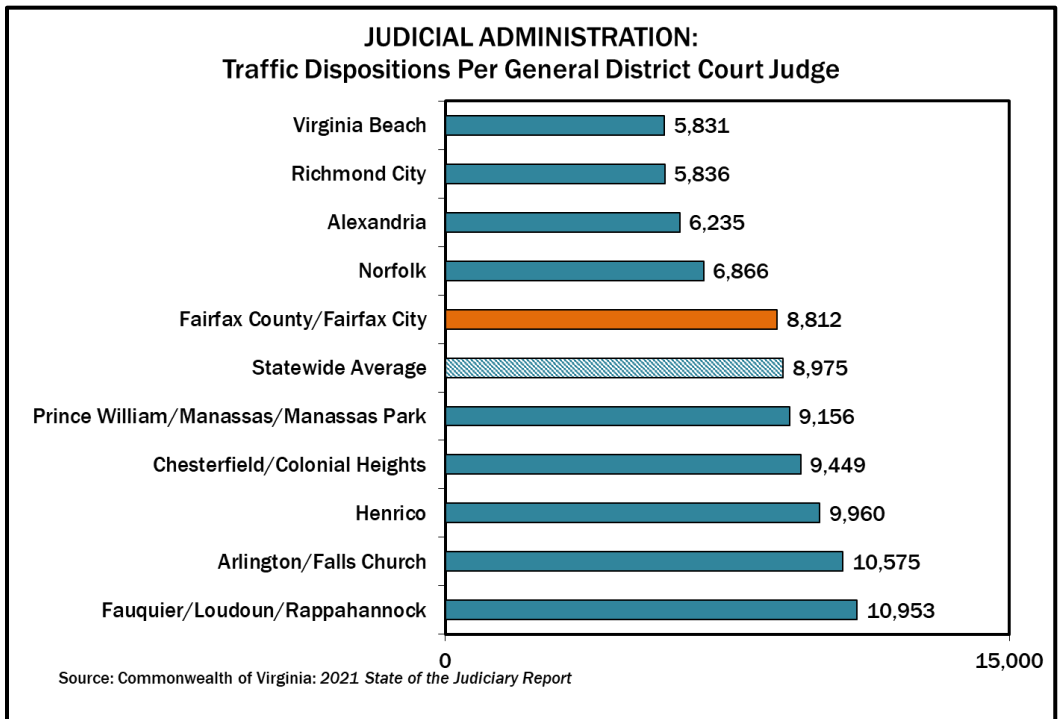
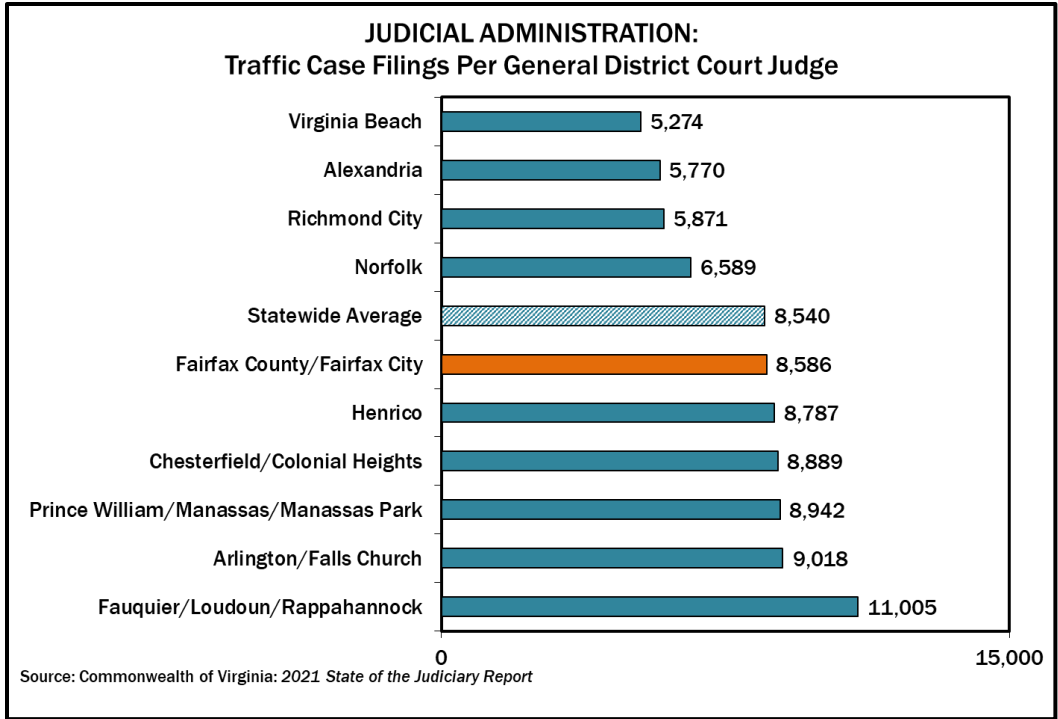
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