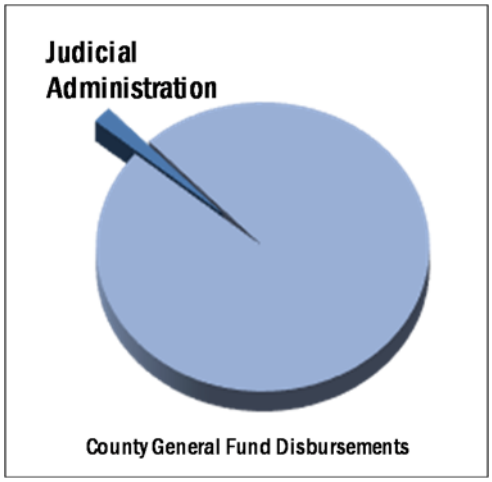
Judicial Administration Program Area Summary

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 decreasing 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 such offenses as murder, rape, robbery, burglary and illegal drug sales, from arrest to trial. It prosecutes a wide variety of misdemeanor and traffic cases, including more than 4,000 driving under-the-influence violations, thousands of assaults, and thousands of petty thefts.

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 Program Area Summary

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 for the past ten years. In FY 2015, 420,081 court cases were 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.

Strategic Direction

As part of the countywide focus on developing strategic plans, agencies took steps to establish or update their vision and values statements; perform environmental scans; and define strategies for achieving their missions. These are then linked to the overall County Core Purpose and Vision Elements (see adjacent box). Common themes in the Judicial Administration program area include:

- Equal access to justice
- Fair and timely resolution of cases
- Effective use of technology
- Volunteer utilization
- Courthouse security

COUNTY CORE PURPOSE

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods, and diverse communities of Fairfax County by:

- **Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities**
- **Building Livable Spaces**
- **Practicing Environmental Stewardship**
- **Connecting People and Places**
- **Creating a Culture of Engagement**
- **Maintaining Healthy Economies**
- **Exercising Corporate Stewardship**

More on each agency in this program area can be found in the individual narratives that follow this section. The complete budget narrative pertaining to the Office of the Sheriff can be found in the Public Safety program area section of Volume 1.

Program Area Summary by Category

Category	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted	FY 2016 Revised	FY 2017 Advertised	FY 2017 Adopted
FUNDING					
Expenditures:					
Personnel Services	$28,600,630	$28,362,671	$28,107,953	$29,351,489	$30,699,815
Operating Expenses	7,348,787	7,147,202	8,138,375	7,082,202	7,095,586
Capital Equipment	175,176	0	41,300	0	0
Total Expenditures	$36,124,593	$35,509,873	$36,287,628	$36,433,691	$37,795,401
Income	$20,141,491	$19,980,800	$19,835,339	$19,891,897	$19,997,105
NET COST TO THE COUNTY	$15,983,102	$15,529,073	$16,452,289	$16,541,794	$17,798,296
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)					
Regular	367 / 366.5	370 / 369.5	368 / 367.5	369 / 368.5	373 / 372.5
Exempt	28 / 28	28 / 28	28 / 28	28 / 28	28 / 28
State	136 / 133.1	136 / 133.1	136 / 133.1	136 / 133.1	159 / 156.1

Program Area Summary by Agency

Category	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted	FY 2016 Revised	FY 2017 Advertised	FY 2017 Adopted
Circuit Court and Records	$10,570,642	$10,837,645	$10,876,231	$11,137,339	$11,137,339
Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney	3,376,105	3,718,255	3,736,115	3,845,240	3,845,240
General District Court	2,098,003	2,370,845	2,554,668	2,421,762	3,783,472
Office of the Sheriff	20,079,843	18,583,128	19,120,614	19,029,350	19,029,350
Total Expenditures	$36,124,593	$35,509,873	$36,287,628	$36,433,691	$37,795,401

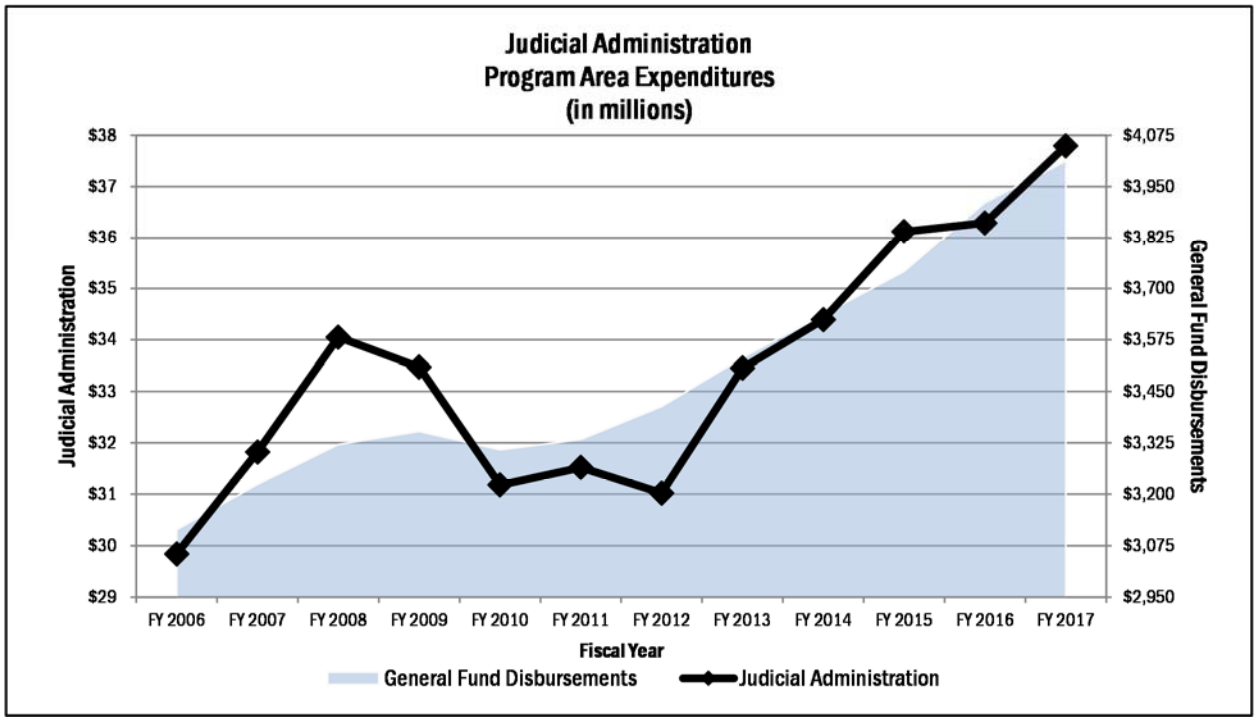
Budget Trends

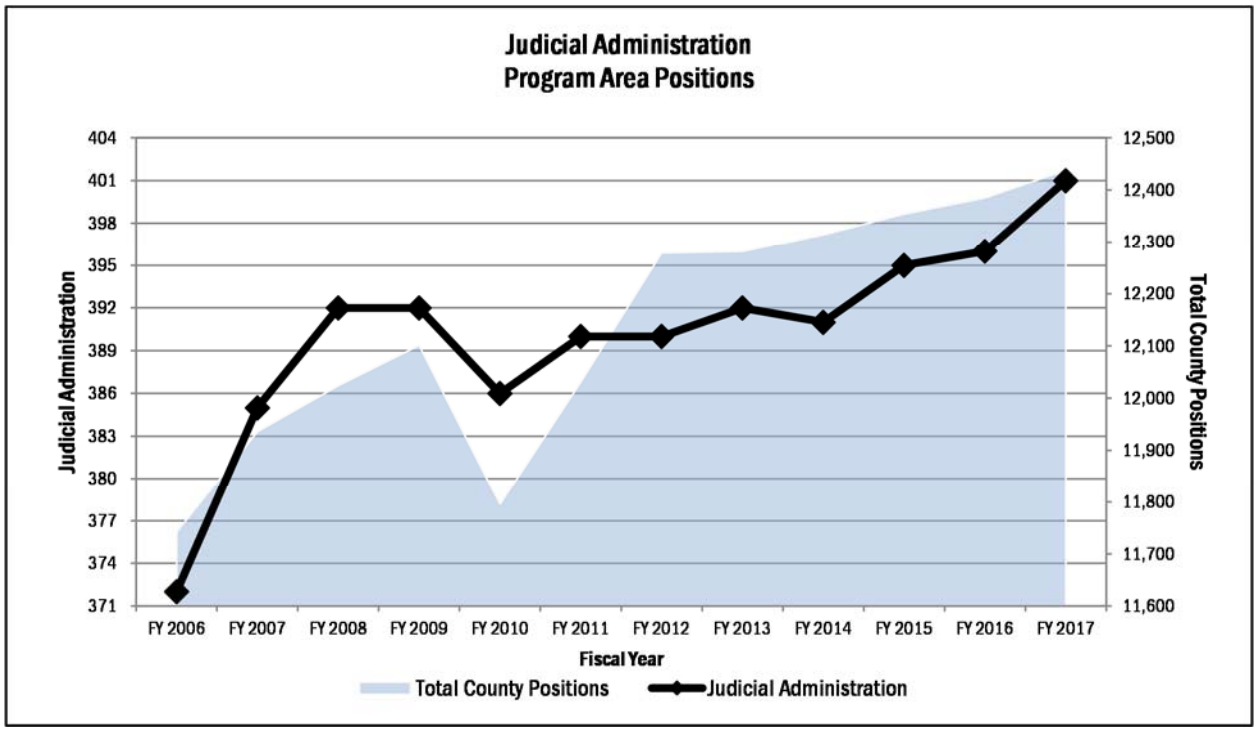
The FY 2017 Adopted Budget Plan funding level of $37,795,401 for the Judicial Administration program area comprises 2.6 percent of the total General Fund Direct Expenditures of $1,474,556,275. In FY 2017, Judicial Administration program area expenditures increased by $2,285,528, or 6.4 percent, over the FY 2016 Adopted Budget Plan total of $35,509,873. This increase is primarily due to Personnel Services-related increases associated with salary supplements for eligible General District Court state employees and for Office of the Public Defender state employees; an increase for the General District Court's participation in the Diversion First Initiative which will allow for the provision of additional pretrial services, community supervision in lieu of incarceration, and administrative case support; and a 1.33 percent market rate adjustment (MRA) for all employees and for performance-based and longevity increases for non-uniformed merit employees, both effective July 2016. In addition, FY 2017 merit and longevity increases (including the full-year impact of FY 2016 increases) for uniformed employees in the Office of the Sheriff, removing the two-year hold at Step 8 in the uniformed public safety pay plans, and a pay adjustment for Constitutional Officers approved by the Board of Supervisors on January 12, 2016 are included in this increase. These amounts are partially offset by reductions for Department of Vehicle Services (DVS) charges based on anticipated billings for fuel, vehicle replacement, and maintenance-related charges and a Personnel Services reduction in the Sheriff's Office resulting from effective management and successful recruiting.

The Judicial Administration program area includes 401 positions (not including state positions), an increase of 5/5.0 FTE from the *FY 2016 Revised Budget Plan* level**.** These new positions are required to support the Diversion First Initiative which is designed to reduce the number of people with mental illness in the County jail by diverting low risk offenders experiencing a mental health crisis to treatment rather than bringing them to jail. These positions will allow the General District Court to provide additional pretrial services, community supervision in lieu of incarceration, and administrative case support.

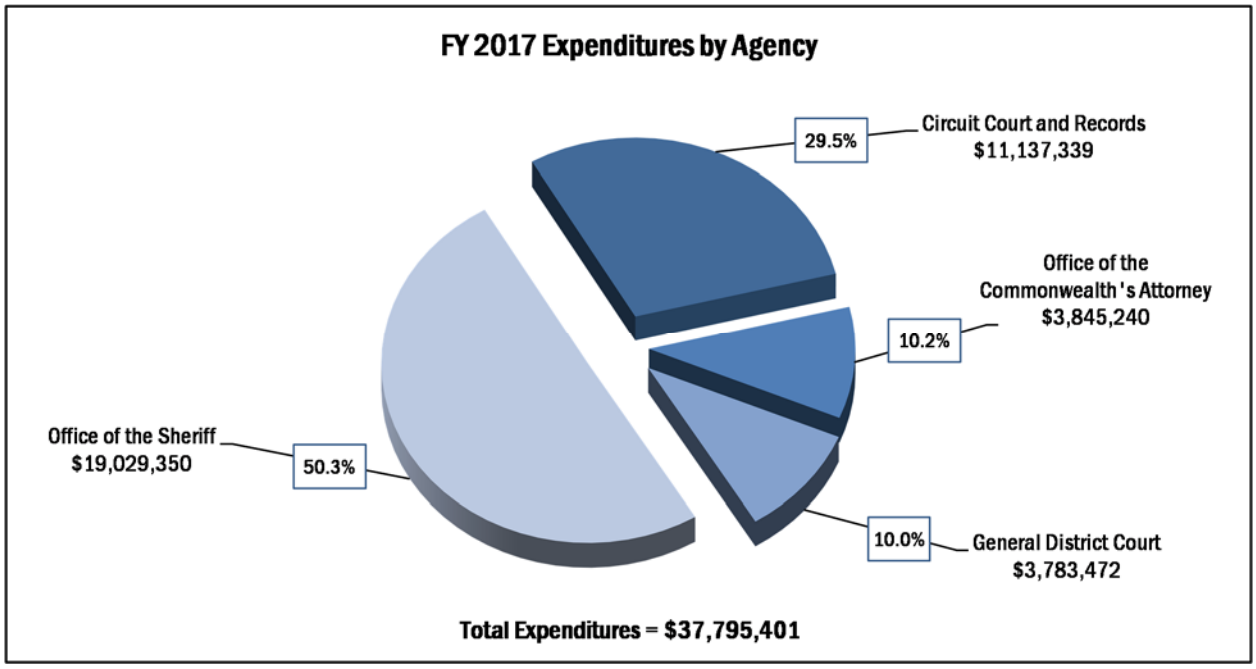
The charts on the following page illustrate funding and position trends for the agencies in this program area compared to countywide expenditure and position trends.

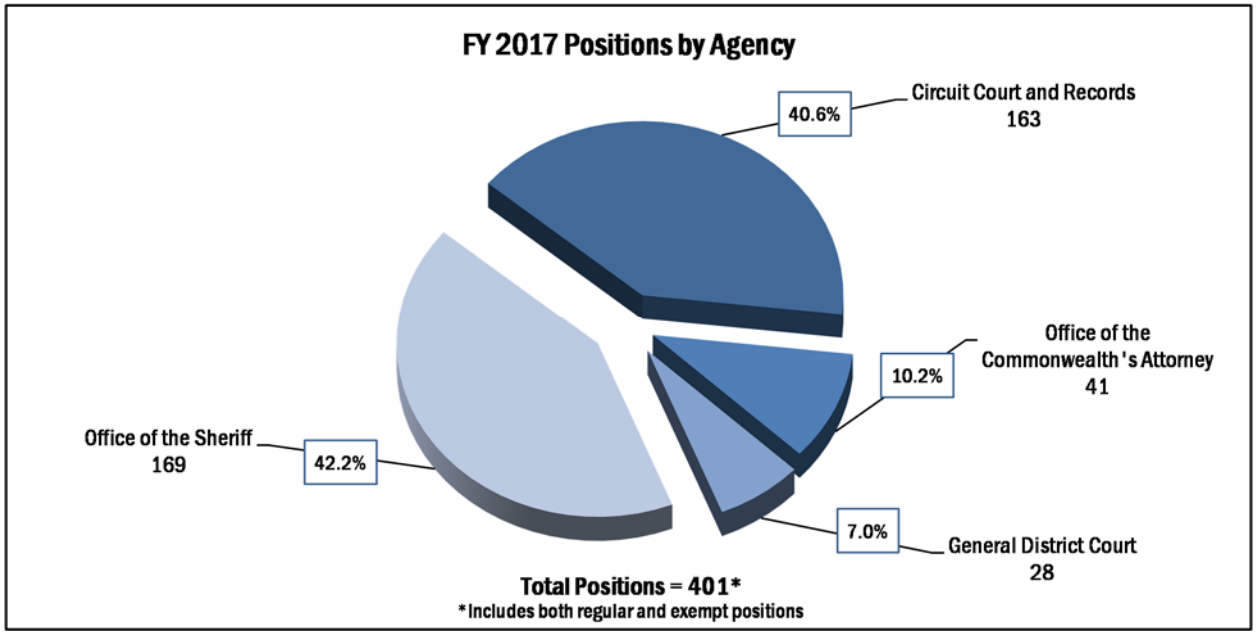
Trends in Expenditures and Positions





FY 2017 Expenditures and Positions by Agency





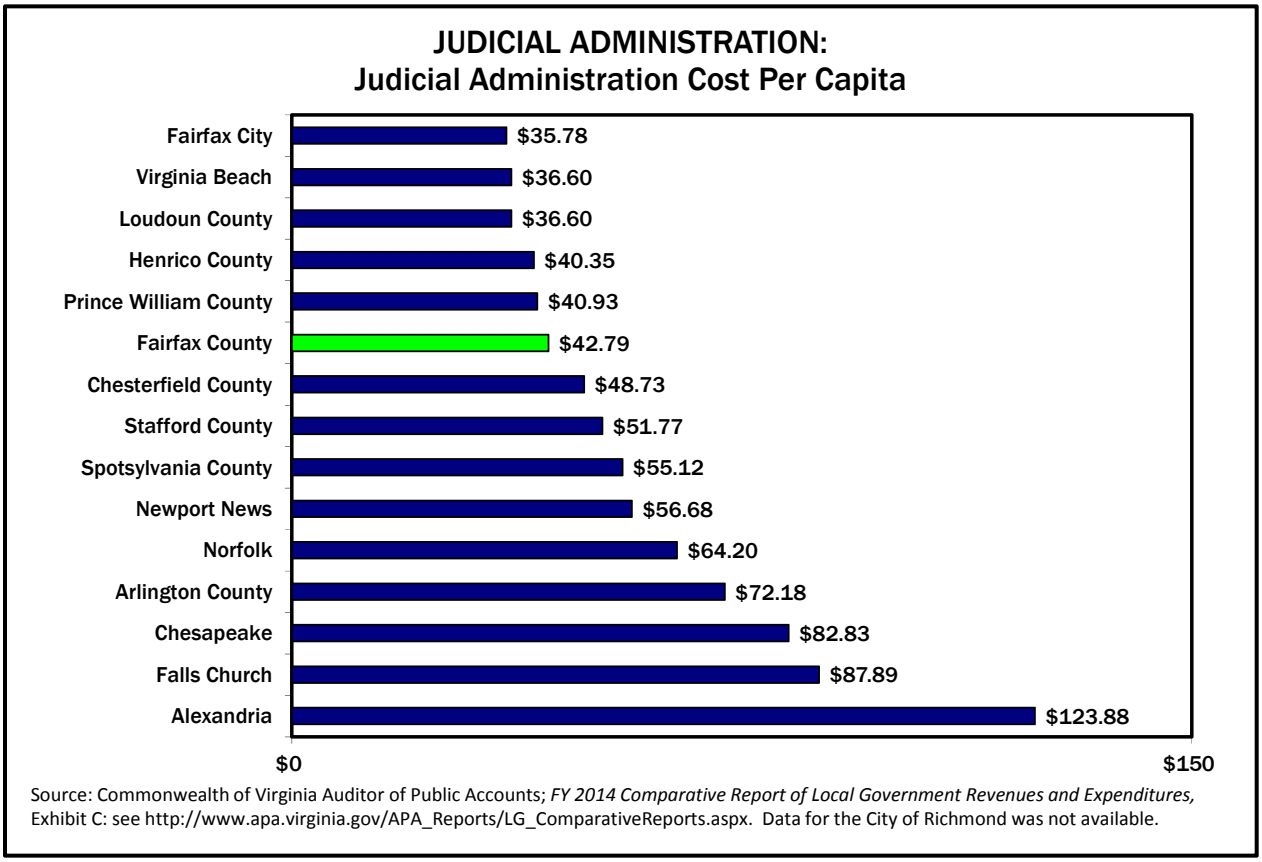
Benchmarking

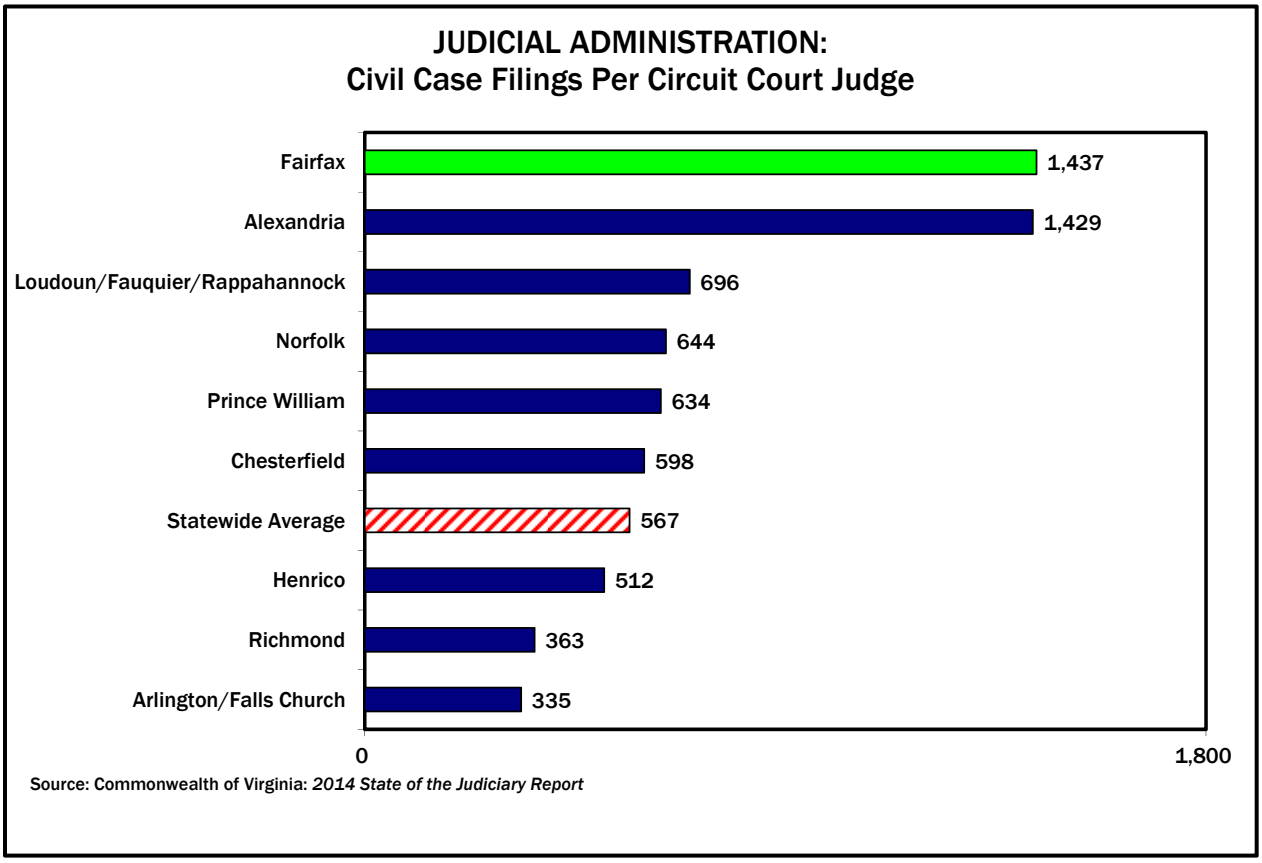
As a means of demonstrating accountability to the public for results achieved, benchmarking data has been included in the annual budget since the FY 2005 budget. Data is included in each of the Program Area Summaries in Volume 1 (General Fund) and Volume 2 (Other Funds) as available. To illustrate program efficiency, data collected by the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) for the Commonwealth of Virginia that show cost per capita in each of the seven program areas are included. FY 2014 represents the most recent year for which data is available due to the time required to collect and verify the data. An advantage to including these APA data is comparability. In Virginia, local governments follow stringent guidelines regarding the classification of program area expenses. Cost data are provided annually to the APA for review and compilation in an annual report. Since data is not prepared by any one jurisdiction, its objectivity is less questionable than they would be 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. As seen below, Fairfax County has among the lowest cost per capita rates in the Judicial Administration program area for Northern Virginia localities and other large Virginia jurisdictions.

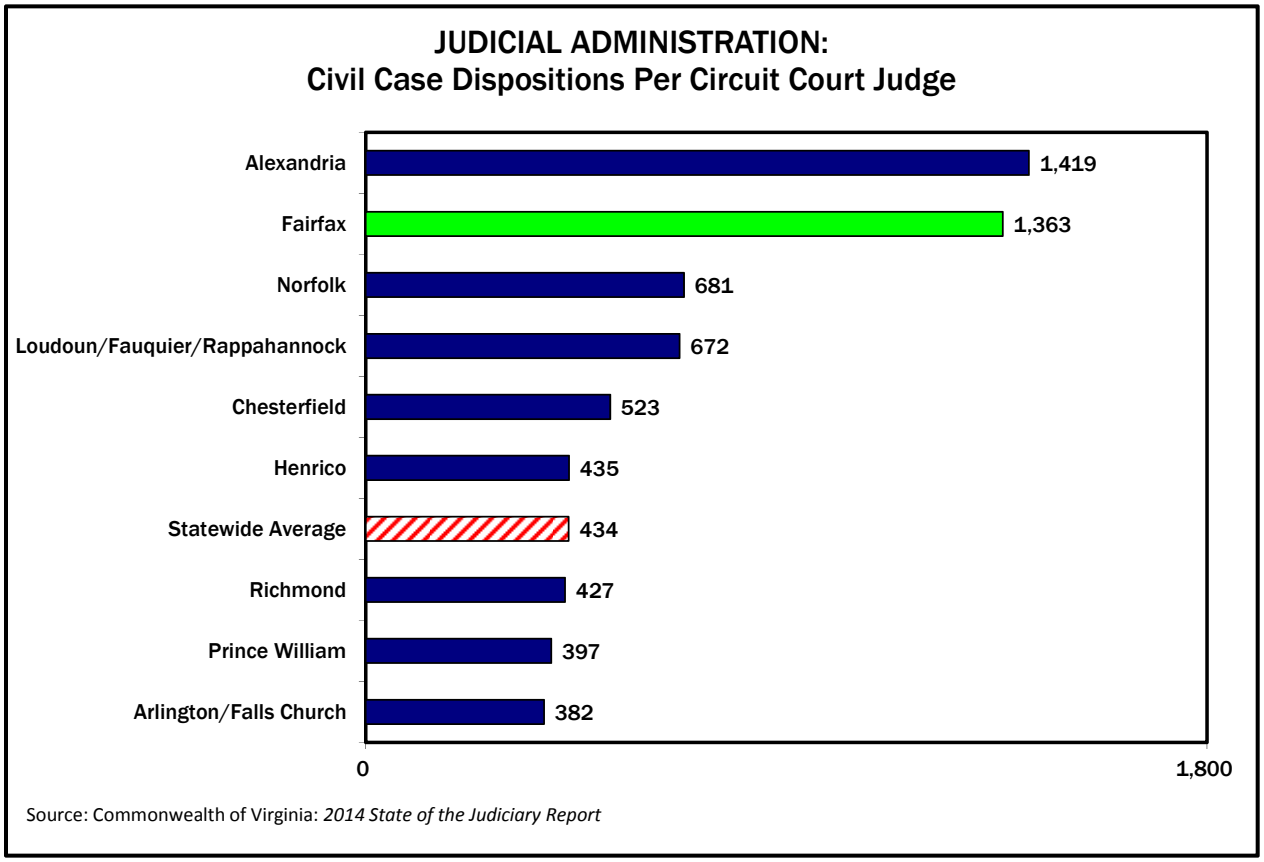
While a major portion of Fairfax County's comparative performance data for other program areas comes from the International City/County Management Association's (ICMA) benchmarking effort, judicial administration is not a service area that is addressed in that program. However, the State Supreme Court produces an extensive report on the annual "State of the Judiciary." The most recent report available is for Calendar Year 2014. In 2014, there were three Circuit Courts, Virginia Beach (2nd), Alexandria (18th), and Fairfax (19th), that did not use the Courts Automated Information System - Case Management System (CAIS-CMS). These courts transmitted their own manually or electronically-tabulated data. Trends within each district are provided, as are comparisons to state averages. In addition, in some instances, urban averages for cities are also illustrated to show comparison to statewide averages. The link for the 2014 "State of the Judiciary" report is located within the Appendix Trial Court Caseload Statistics:

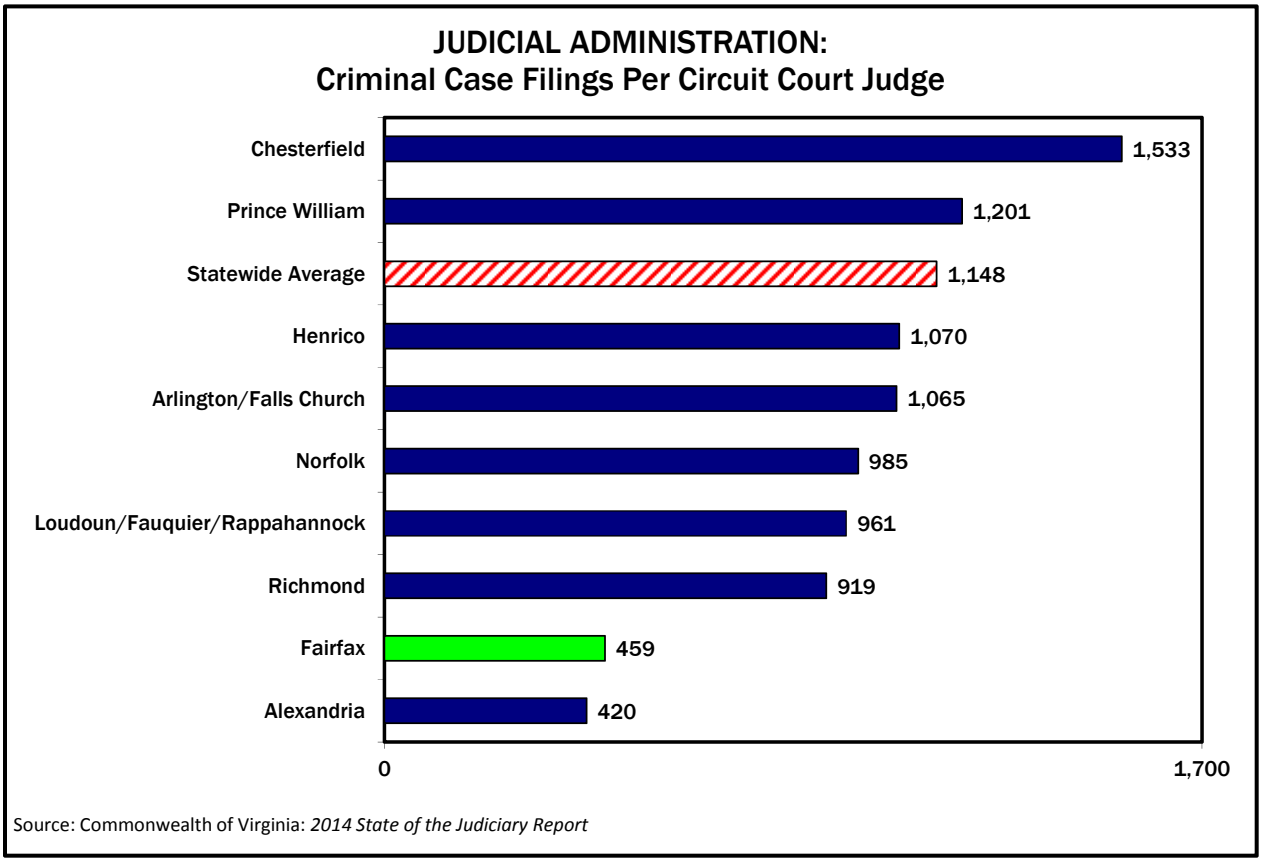
www.courts.state.va.us/courtadmin/aoc/judpln/csi/sjr/2014/state of the judiciary report.pdf:

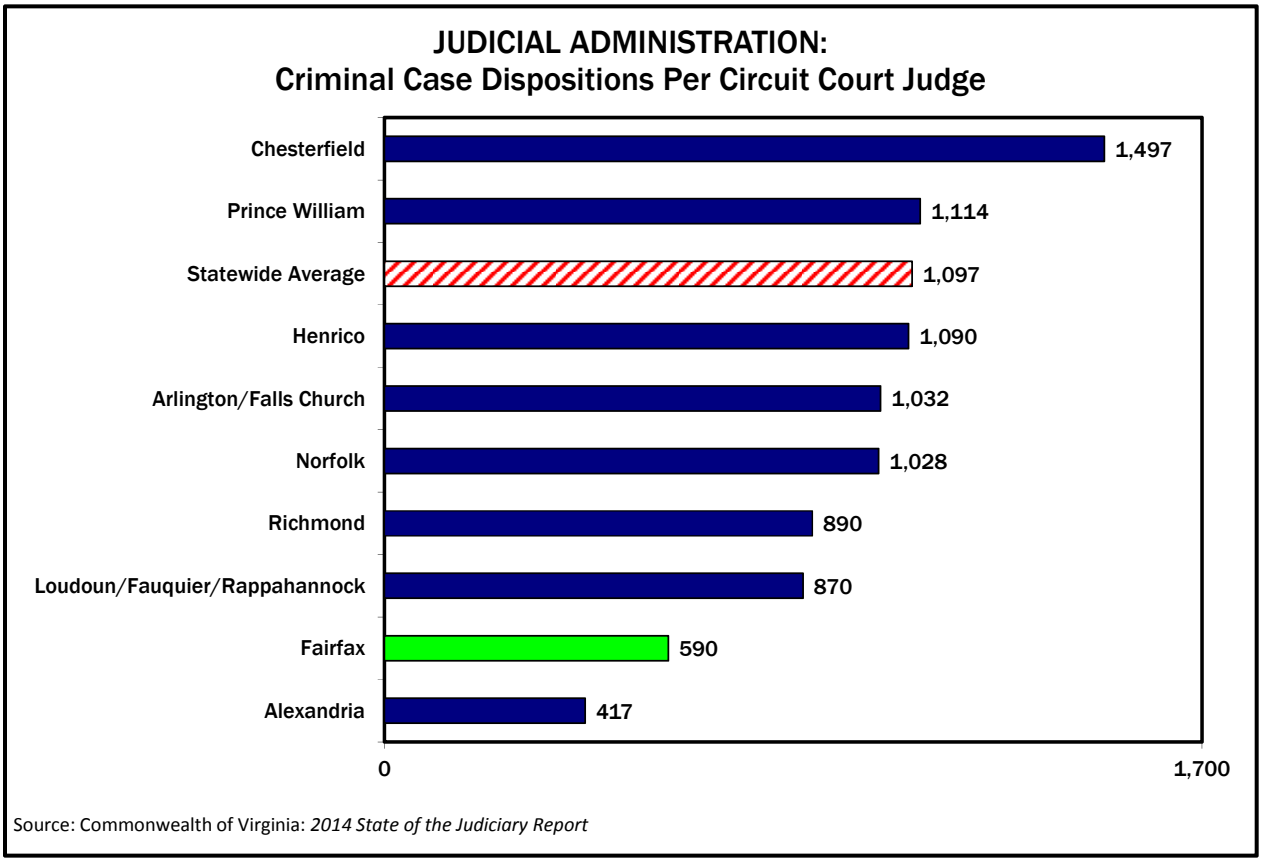
The metrics published in the 2014 *State of the Judiciary Report* of the Commonwealth of Virginia focus on *filings* and *dispositions*. In the most general sense, a filing is the initiation of a legal action with the court through a carefully prescribed legal procedure. The procedure used to count filings 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.

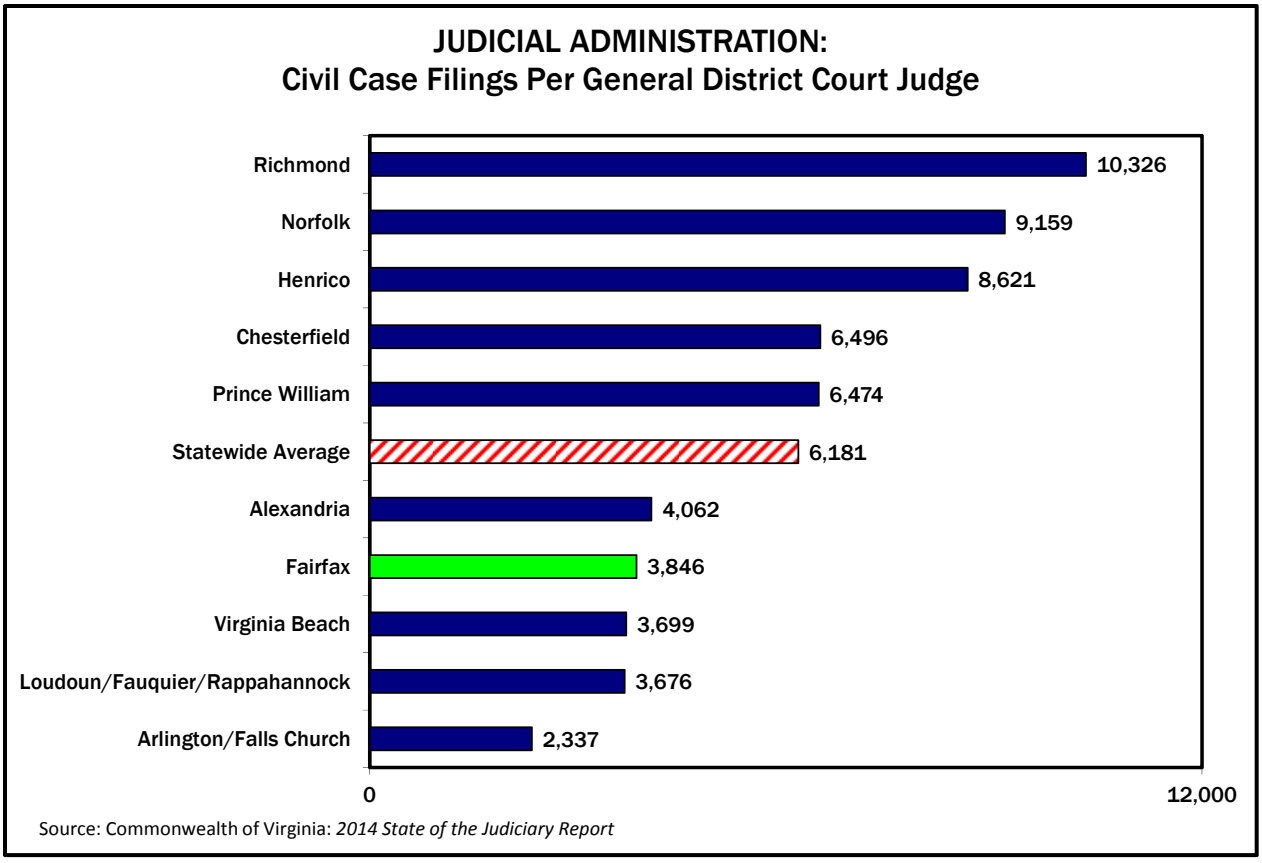

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
Judicial Administration Cost Per Capita
Fairfax City $35.78
Virginia Beach $36.60
Loudoun County $36.60
Henrico County $40.35
Prince William County $40.93
Fairfax County $42.79
Chesterfield County $48.73
Stafford County $51.77
Spotsylvania County $55.12
Newport News $56.68
Norfolk $64.20
Arlington County $72.18
Chesapeake $82.83
Falls Church $87.89
Alexandria $123.88
$0
$150
Source: Commonwealth of Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts; FY 2014 Comparative Report of Local Government Revenues and Expenditures, Exhibit C: see http://www.apa.virginia.gov/APA_Reports/LG_ComparativeReports.aspx. Data for the City of Richmond was not available.

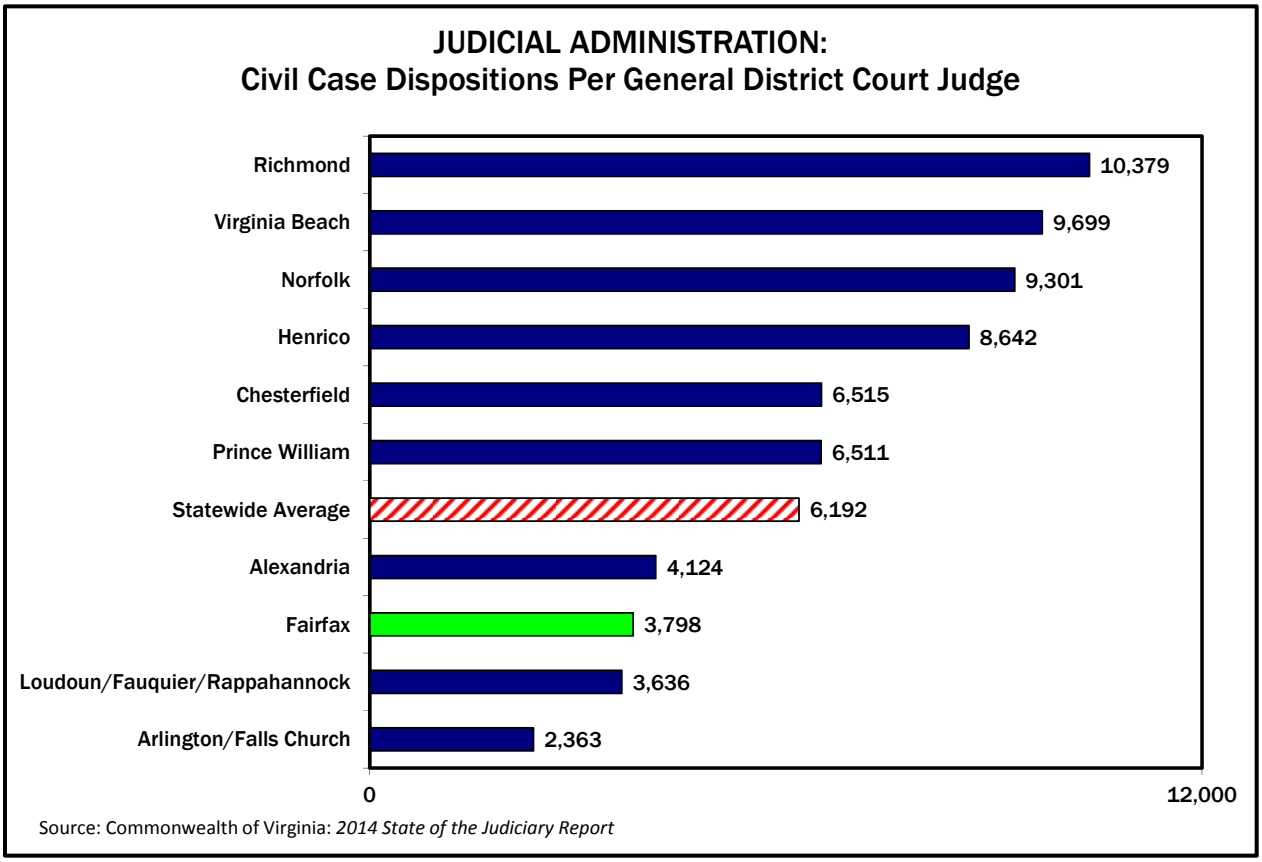

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
Civil Case Filings Per Circuit Court Judge
Fairfax 1,437
Alexandria 1,429
Loudoun/Fauquier/Rappahannock 696
Norfolk 644
Prince William 634
Chesterfield 598
Statewide Average 567
Henrico 512
Richmond 363
Arlington/Falls Church 335
0
1,800
Source: Commonwealth of Virginia: 2014 State of the Judiciary Report

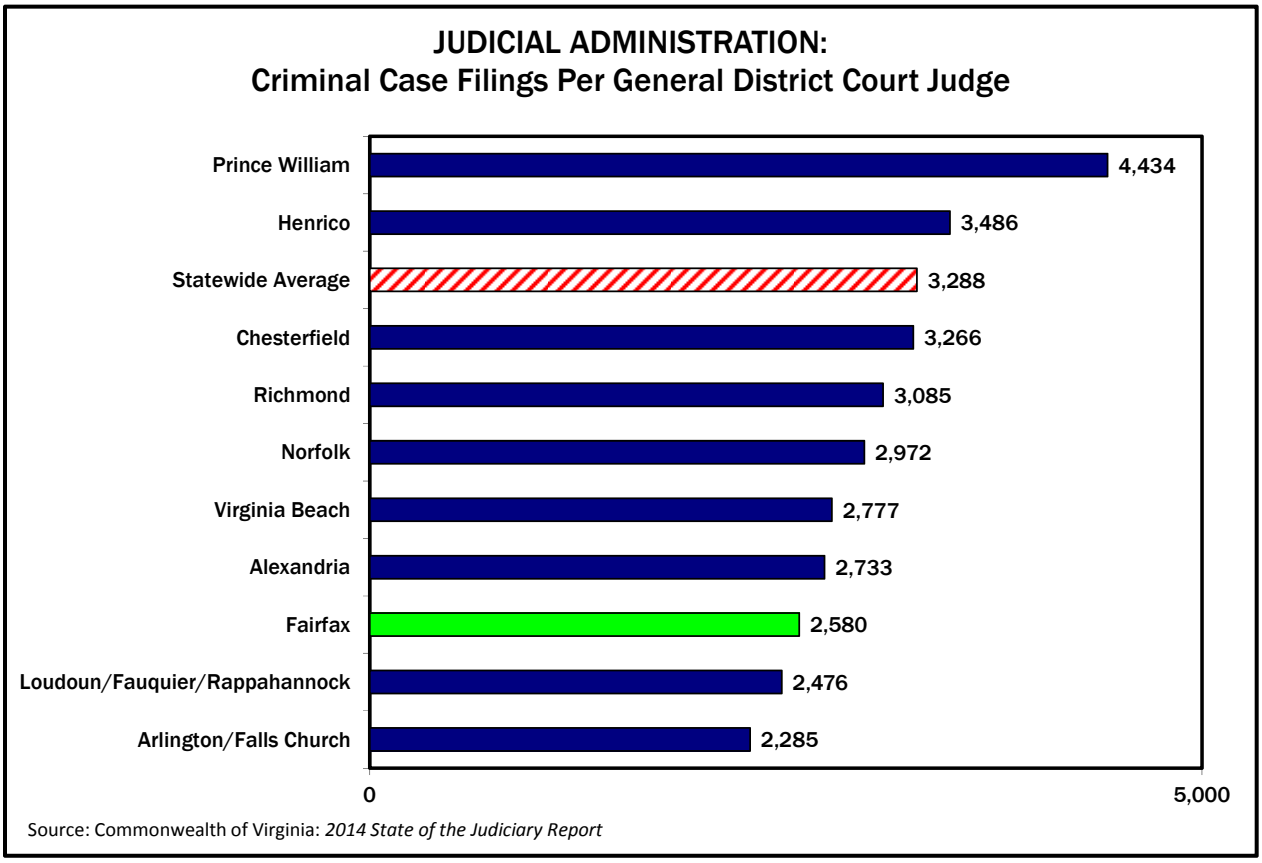

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
Civil Case Dispositions Per Circuit Court Judge
Alexandria
1,419
Fairfax
1,363
Norfolk
681
Loudoun/Fauquier/Rappahannock
672
Chesterfield
523
Henrico
435
Statewide Average
434
Richmond
427
Prince William
397
Arlington/Falls Church
382
0
1,800
Source: Commonwealth of Virginia: 2014 State of the Judiciary Report

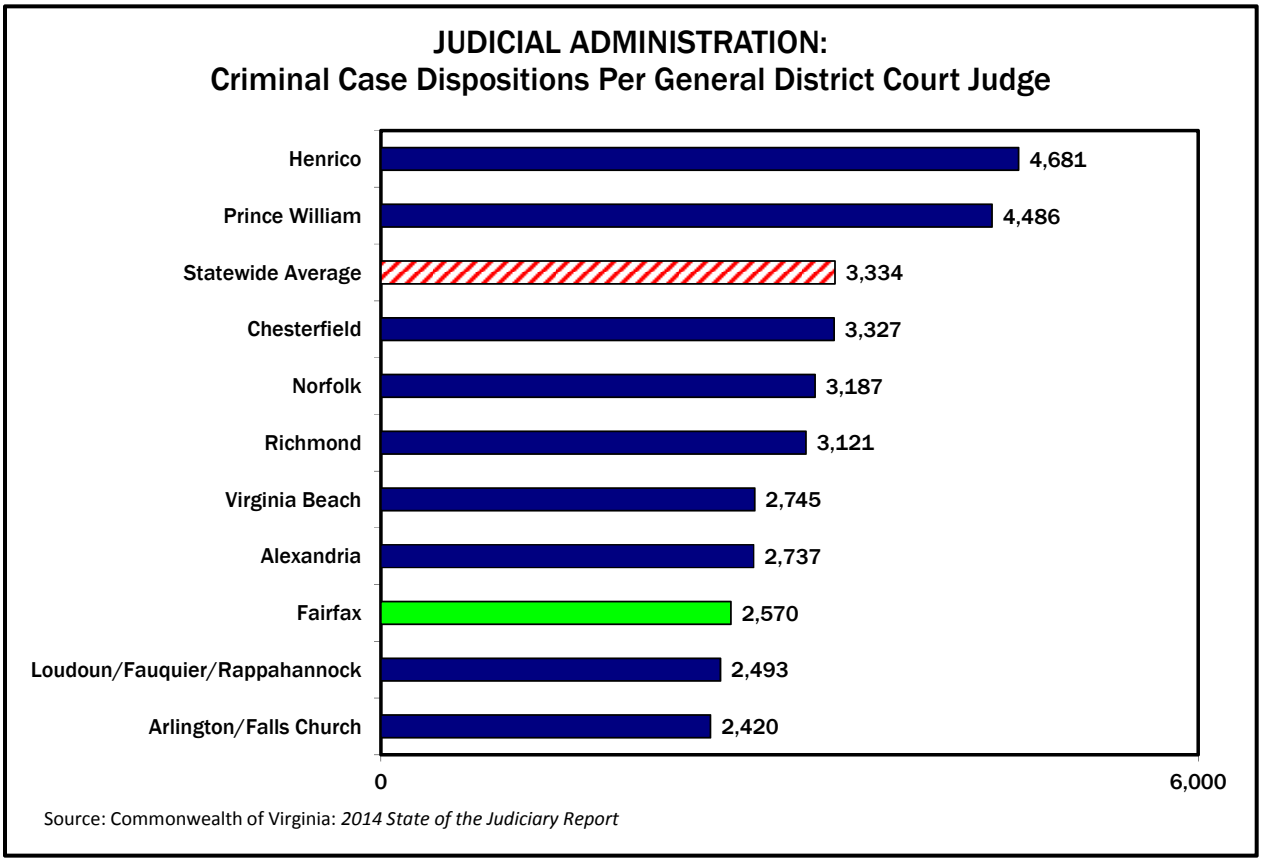

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
Criminal Case Filings Per Circuit Court Judge
Chesterfield
1,533
Prince William
1,201
Statewide Average
1,148
Henrico
1,070
Arlington/Falls Church
1,065
Norfolk
985
Loudoun/Fauquier/Rappahannock
961
Richmond
919
Fairfax
459
Alexandria
420
0
1,700
Source: Commonwealth of Virginia: 2014 State of the Judiciary Report

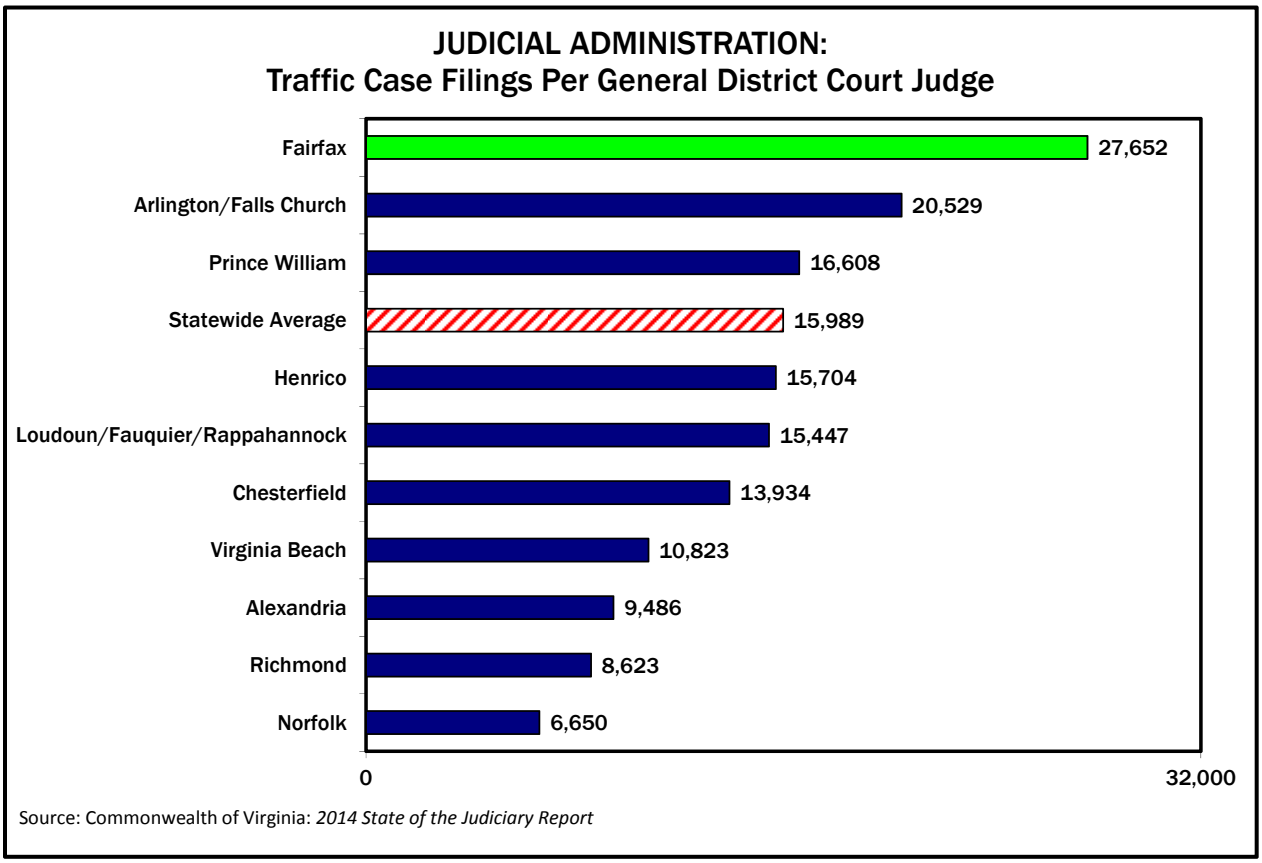

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
Criminal Case Dispositions Per Circuit Court Judge
Chesterfield
1,497
Prince William
1,114
Statewide Average
1,097
Henrico
1,090
Arlington/Falls Church
1,032
Norfolk
1,028
Richmond
890
Loudoun/Fauquier/Rappahannock
870
Fairfax
590
Alexandria
417
0
1,700
Source: Commonwealth of Virginia: 2014 State of the Judiciary Report

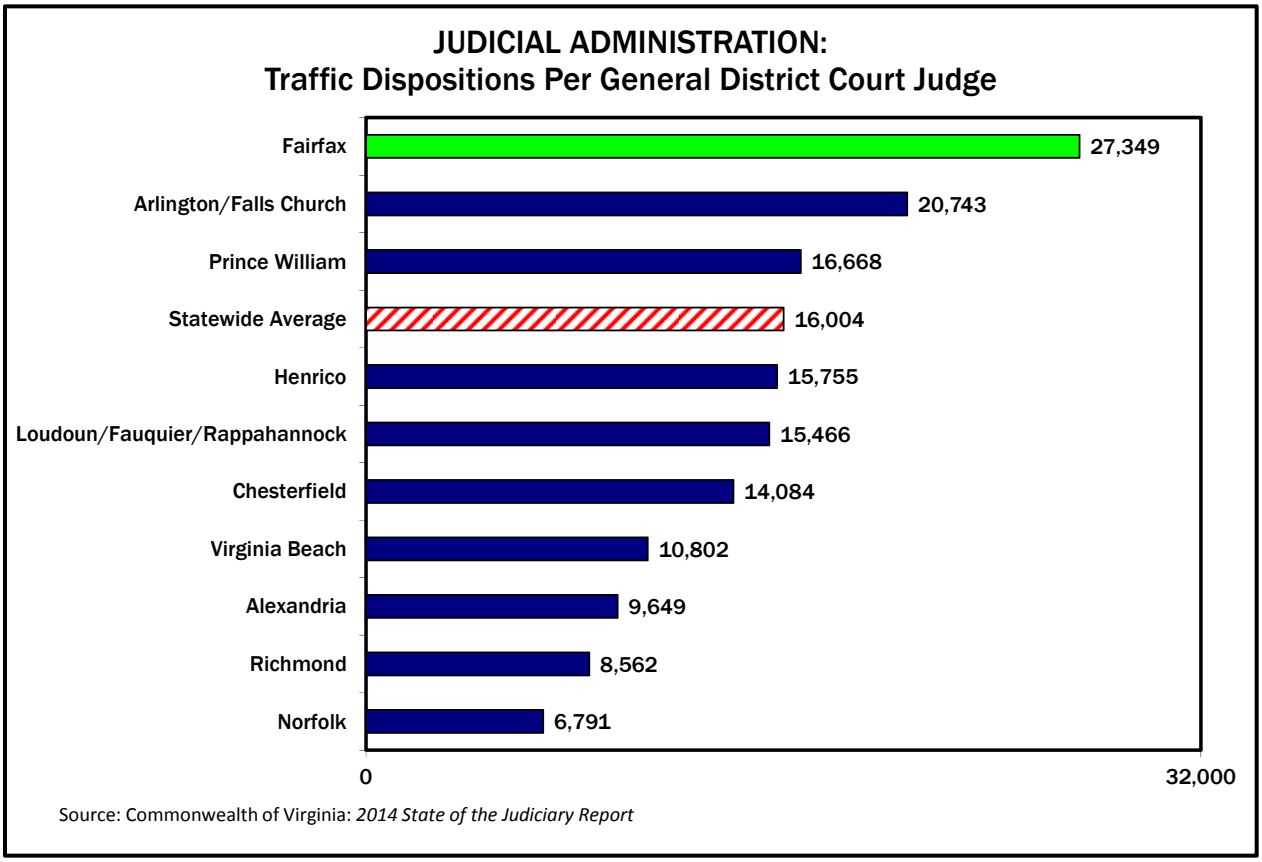

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
Civil Case Filings Per General District Court Judge
Richmond
10,326
Norfolk
9,159
Henrico
8,621
Chesterfield
6,496
Prince William
6,474
Statewide Average
6,181
Alexandria
4,062
Fairfax
3,846
Virginia Beach
3,699
Loudoun/Fauquier/Rappahannock
3,676
Arlington/Falls Church
2,337
0
12,000
Source: Commonwealth of Virginia: 2014 State of the Judiciary Report

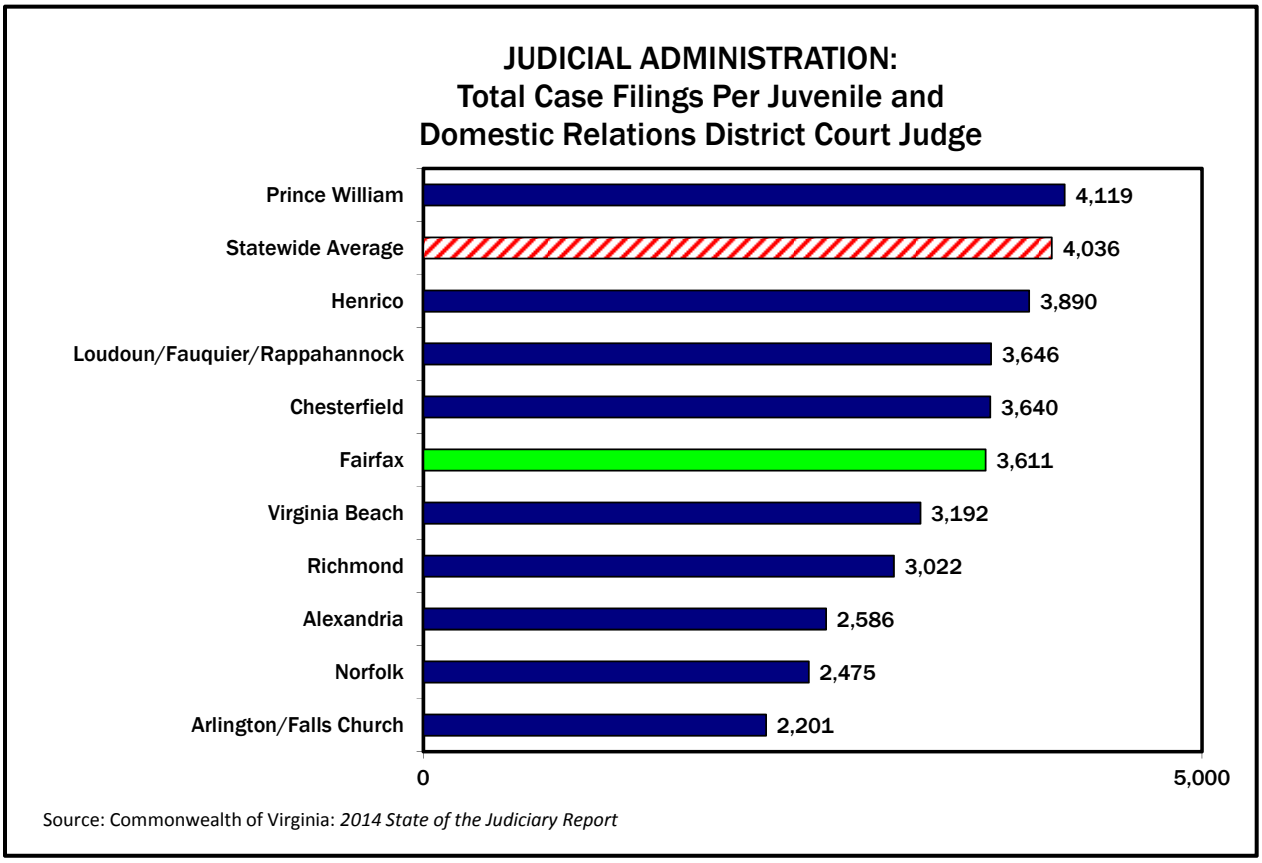

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
Civil Case Dispositions Per General District Court Judge
Richmond
10,379
Virginia Beach
9,699
Norfolk
9,301
Henrico
8,642
Chesterfield
6,515
Prince William
6,511
Statewide Average
6,192
Alexandria
4,124
Fairfax
3,798
Loudoun/Fauquier/Rappahannock
3,636
Arlington/Falls Church
2,363
0
12,000
Source: Commonwealth of Virginia: 2014 State of the Judiciary Report

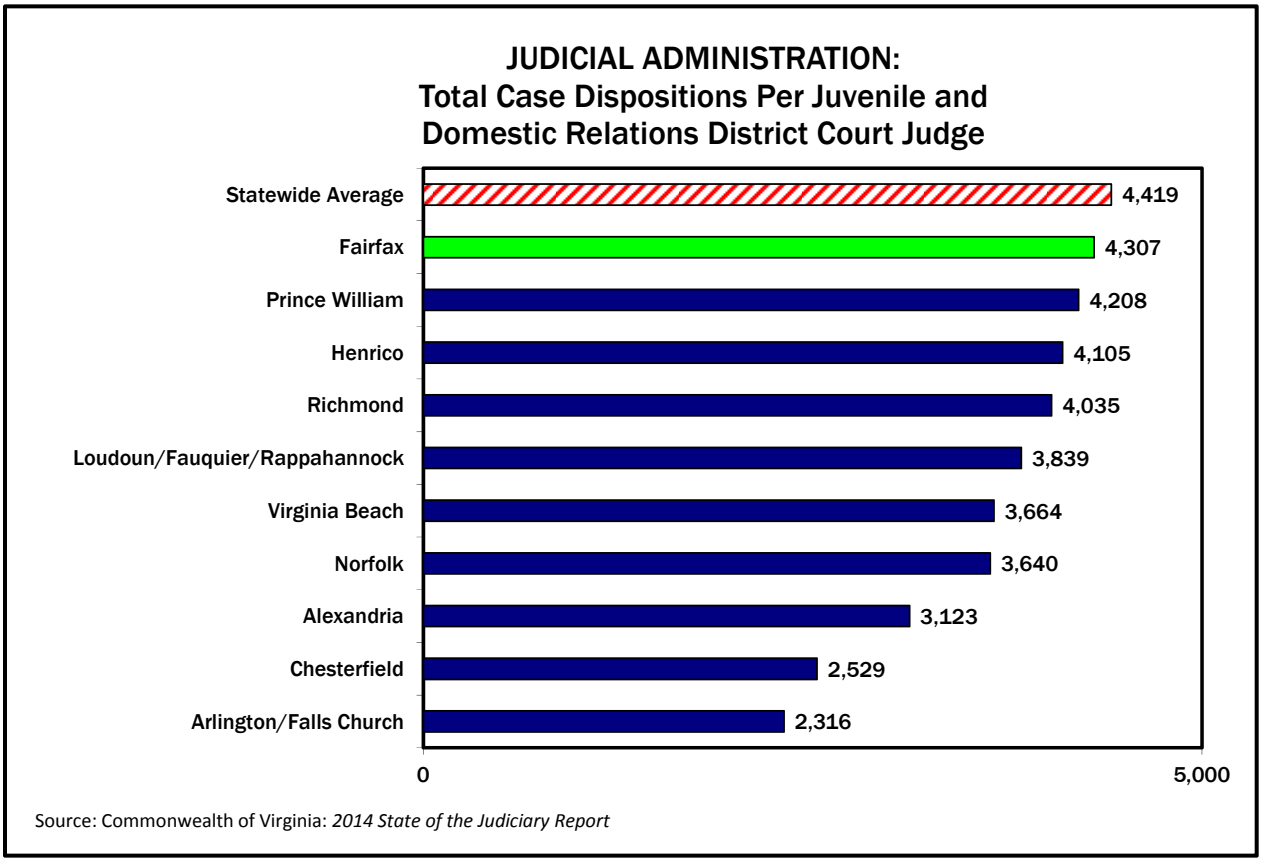

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
Criminal Case Filings Per General District Court Judge
Prince William
4,434
Henrico
3,486
Statewide Average
3,288
Chesterfield
3,266
Richmond
3,085
Norfolk
2,972
Virginia Beach
2,777
Alexandria
2,733
Fairfax
2,580
Loudoun/Fauquier/Rappahannock
2,476
Arlington/Falls Church
2,285
0
5,000
Source: Commonwealth of Virginia: 2014 State of the Judiciary Report


JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
Criminal Case Dispositions Per General District Court Judge
Henrico 4,681
Prince William 4,486
Statewide Average 3,334
Chesterfield 3,327
Norfolk 3,187
Richmond 3,121
Virginia Beach 2,745
Alexandria 2,737
Fairfax 2,570
Loudoun/Fauquier/Rappahannock 2,493
Arlington/Falls Church 2,420
0
6,000
Source: Commonwealth of Virginia: 2014 State of the Judiciary Report


JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
Traffic Case Filings Per General District Court Judge
Fairfax 27,652
Arlington/Falls Church 20,529
Prince William 16,608
Statewide Average 15,989
Henrico 15,704
Loudoun/Fauquier/Rappahannock 15,447
Chesterfield 13,934
Virginia Beach 10,823
Alexandria 9,486
Richmond 8,623
Norfolk 6,650
0
32,000
Source: Commonwealth of Virginia: 2014 State of the Judiciary Report


JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
Traffic Dispositions Per General District Court Judge
Fairfax
27,349
Arlington/Falls Church
20,743
Prince William
16,668
Statewide Average
16,004
Henrico
15,755
Loudoun/Fauquier/Rappahannock
15,466
Chesterfield
14,084
Virginia Beach
10,802
Alexandria
9,649
Richmond
8,562
Norfolk
6,791
0
32,000
Source: Commonwealth of Virginia: 2014 State of the Judiciary Report


JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
Total Case Filings Per Juvenile and
Domestic Relations District Court Judge
Prince William
4,119
Statewide Average
4,036
Henrico
3,890
Loudoun/Fauquier/Rappahannock
3,646
Chesterfield
3,640
Fairfax
3,611
Virginia Beach
3,192
Richmond
3,022
Alexandria
2,586
Norfolk
2,475
Arlington/Falls Church
2,201
0
5,000
Source: Commonwealth of Virginia: 2014 State of the Judiciary Report


JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
Total Case Dispositions Per Juvenile and
Domestic Relations District Court Judge
Statewide Average
4,419
Fairfax
4,307
Prince William
4,208
Henrico
4,105
Richmond
4,035
Loudoun/Fauquier/Rappahannock
3,839
Virginia Beach
3,664
Norfolk
3,640
Alexandria
3,123
Chesterfield
2,529
Arlington/Falls Church
2,316
0
5,000
Source: Commonwealth of Virginia: 2014 State of the Judiciary Report