

CIRCUIT COURT SERVICES

DESCRIPTION

The Circuit Court of Henrico County (Fourteenth Judicial Circuit) is the trial court of general jurisdiction with the authority to try a full range of civil, chancery/equity, and criminal cases.

In civil cases, the Circuit Court exercises concurrent jurisdiction with the General District Court in money claims of one to twenty-five thousand dollars, and original jurisdiction for claims over \$25,000. Also included on the civil docket are condemnation trials.

In criminal cases, the Circuit Court has jurisdiction over the trials of misdemeanor and felony cases – offenses punishable by confinement in jails or other correctional institutions. Court costs and fines are assessed in court against those charged.

The Circuit Court also exercises jurisdiction in domestic and other chancery/equity cases. This includes all divorce matters, as well as disputes concerning wills and estates, guardianships, and partition suits.

The Circuit Court exercises appellate jurisdiction over appeals of civil and criminal matters from the Henrico Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court and the Henrico General District Court. Circuit Court judges also hear appeals from certain administrative agencies in the Commonwealth and Henrico County.

OBJECTIVES

- To administer justice fairly, according to applicable laws, in a timely manner.
- To operate an efficient and effective court system in the administration of justice for the citizens of Henrico County.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUMMARY

Annual Fiscal Plan

| Description | FY23 | FY24 | FY25 | Change |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | Actual | Original | Approved | 24 to 25 |
| Personnel | \$ 854,819 | \$ 832,361 | \$ 908,985 | 9.2% |
| Operation | 77,427 | 64,344 | 68,194 | 6.0% |
| Capital | 0 | 1,400 | 1,400 | 0.0% |
| Total | <u>\$ 932,246</u> | <u>\$ 898,105</u> | <u>\$ 978,579</u> | <u>9.0%</u> |
| Personnel Complement | 11 | 11 | 11 | 0 |

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PERFORMANCE MEASURES

| | <u>FY23</u> | <u>FY24</u> | <u>FY25</u> | <u>Change 24 to 25</u> |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Workload Measures | | | | |
| Full Time Judges | 5 | 5 | 5 | - |
| Jury Commissioners | 6 | 6 | 6 | - |
| Citizens Eligible to Serve as Petit Jurors | 7,600 | 7,845 | 7,845 | - |
| Citizens Called to Serve as Petit Jurors | 7,300 | 7,500 | 7,500 | - |
| Jury Panels | 800 | 950 | 950 | - |
| Grand Jurors Called to Serve | 108 | 84 | 84 | - |
| Grand Jurors on Master Panel | 120 | 101 | 101 | - |

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Circuit Court Service's budget for FY25 is \$978,579. This represents an increase of \$80,474 or 9.0% from the FY24 budget. The personnel increase of \$76,624 was the effect of rising employee salary, healthcare, and benefit costs. The \$3,850 operating budget increase is the result of increasing food costs, jury trials, and necessary conferences. The capital budget remains unchanged from the previous fiscal year.

DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

There are five judges elected to the Circuit Court by the General Assembly of Virginia, each for a term of eight years. One Judge is elected Chief Judge every two years. The Chief Judge serves as the administrative judge of the support staff, which consists of five clerical positions, one management specialist, and five law clerks. The judges' salaries are paid directly by the Commonwealth. Fines and costs against those found guilty in certain felony and misdemeanor cases are assessed by the judges. These fines and costs are collected by the Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

Service levels of this court can be measured by the number of cases adjudicated in the Circuit Court each year. This includes criminal, civil, domestic, and appeals from the General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts, along with those carried over from the past year, and requests for juries. According to 2023 Caseload Statistical Information, the caseload for the Fourteenth Circuit showed 14,719 cases (civil, criminal, and miscellaneous) commenced, with an average of 2,943 per judge. There were 4,931 total criminal cases commenced, with an average of 987 per judge. There were 6,685 civil cases (which includes the miscellaneous and other categories) commenced, with an average of 1,337 per judge. The total number of cases (civil and criminal) concluded was 13,961 in 2023, with an average of 2,739 per judge.

In addition, the Circuit Court responds to telephone inquiries from citizens and other courts, coordinates with the Sheriff on courthouse security, provides internships to law students, and contributes to educational programs to improve the administration of justice. Individual judges also actively participate in organizations, committees, and programs outside of their everyday duties in the courtroom, including but not limited to the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission, the Benchbook Committee, the Drug Court Program, Virginia Continuing Legal Education, and Bench Bar Conference. The judges make themselves available for three judge panels at the request of the Chief

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Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia and any other committee or panel the Chief Justice may request of them. In addition to these activities, judges also participate in mock trials conducted by the University of Richmond School of Law, local high school students, and for police officer training.