
OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

DELIVERING JUSTICE, SERVING COMMUNITIES

MARTHA WALTERS, CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE OREGON SUPREME COURT
PATRICIA MCGUIRE, JUDGE, MULTNOMAH COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT
NANCY COZINE, STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
JANUARY 21, 2021



THE ROLE OF THE COURTS IN OUR DEMOCRACY

- Access to Justice
- Public Trust and Confidence
- *A Place to Be Heard, Resolve Disputes, and Solve Conflicts*



COURTS IMPACT PEOPLE IN ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR LIVES

Courts are at the crossroads wherever people have disputes

- Workplaces, Businesses
- Debtor/Creditor and Small Claims
- Treatment Courts
- Mental Health
- Family Law
- Child Welfare
- Protective Orders
- Criminal Justice
- Housing
- Public Benefits
- Tax Disputes
- Election and Ballot Measure Disputes
- Juvenile Dependency and Delinquency
- Claims of Wrongful Injury
- Objections to Government Action



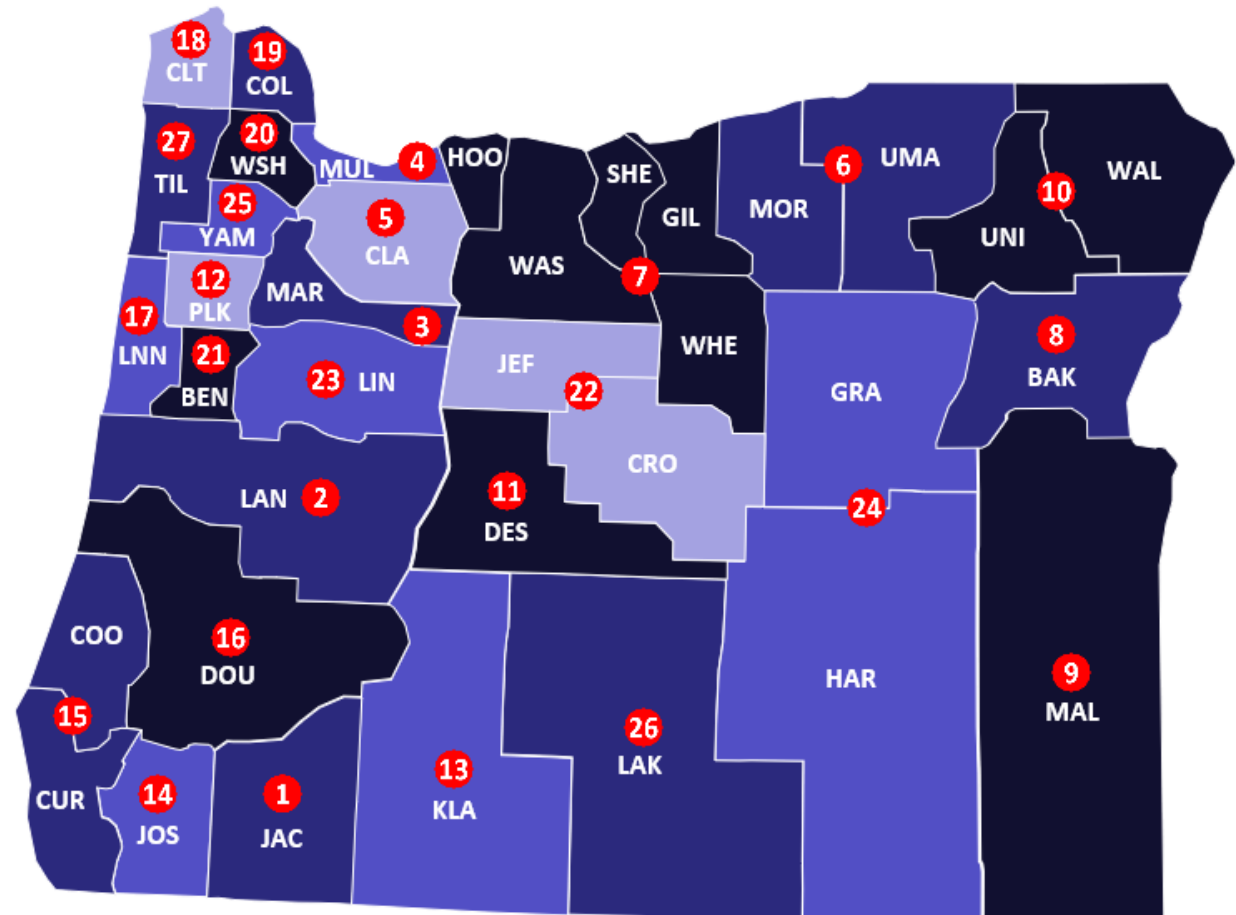
Treatment Court Graduates



Serving Families in Crisis

OREGON COURTS - A UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM

- **Oregon Supreme Court**
- **Court of Appeals**
- **Tax Court**
- **27 Judicial Districts**
 - Circuit Courts in every county
 - 198 Judges
 - 1,620 Staff
 - Serving 4.22 million Oregonians
- **Office of the State Court Administrator**



SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES: COURTS AND COUNTIES

- **Counties provide** courthouses and security for circuit courts.
- **OJD provides** staffing, judges, technology, central personnel, and tools needed to provide justice services.

ORS 1.001; ORS 1.185



PROTECTING STAFF AND LITIGANTS

- Chief Justice Orders issued to keep people safe by restricting the numbers of individuals in courts and enacting measures to further public health.
- Pivot to remote services with rapid expansion of Webex and other tools
- Implemented emergency authority during pandemic granted by HB 4212-A (First Special Session, 2020) through Chief Justice Order and Presiding Judge Orders



“We the people of the State of Oregon to the end that Justice be established, order maintained, and liberty perpetuated, do ordain this Constitution.”
Preamble to the Oregon Constitution

OREGON JUDICIAL BRANCH
STRATEGIC CAMPAIGN 2020-2021

THE FOUR COMMITMENTS

-
- **Improve services and outcomes for people who are underserved, vulnerable, or marginalized;**
 - **Improve access to justice;**
 - **Enhance the public's trust and confidence in Oregon's state government;**
 - **Create a workplace and courthouse culture that is supportive, inclusive, welcoming, and affirming; that embraces diversity**

https://www.courts.oregon.gov/about/Documents/2020-21-Strategic-Campaign_WebCopy.pdf



SERVING FAMILIES & VICTIMS

PATRICIA MCGUIRE, MULTNOMAH COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

CHALLENGES IN FAMILY LAW CASES

HOW DO COURTS PROVIDE SAFE, EFFECTIVE, AND FAIR JUSTICE SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC?

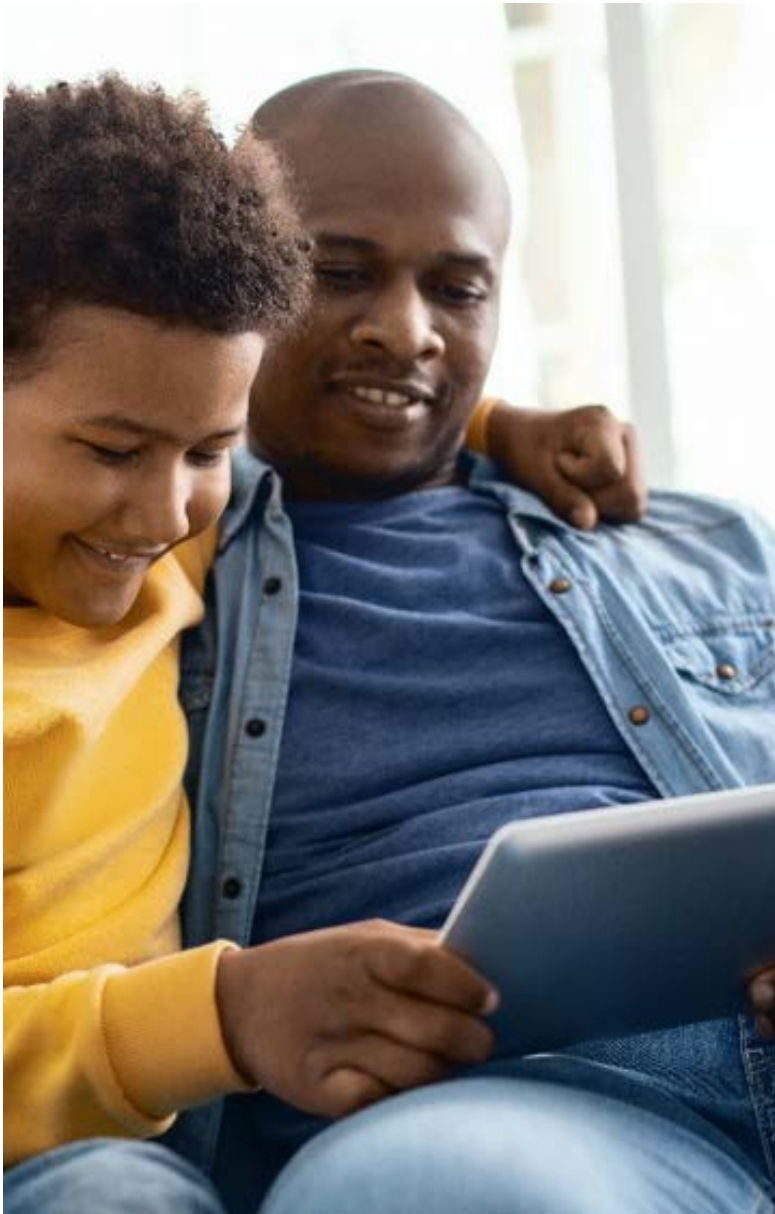
- Family law includes child custody modification, parenting time orders, dissolution (divorce), and other matters impacting couples and those with children.
- Economic and social stressors are now at an all-time high.



ENSURING EQUITY AND FAIRNESS IN FAMILY LAW CASES - PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

People require the court's attention more than ever.

- Self-represented litigants increases complexity and time
 - In 2020, 86.3% of Multnomah Domestic Relations cases had at least one self-represented party at time of judgment (85.7% statewide)
- Technology challenges
- Time, explanation and attention – ensuring understanding is paramount
- Interpreter process takes longer in a remote setting
- Impact of stress on families: many cases will not settle
- Consistency, the need for patience and resilience
- Reducing barriers



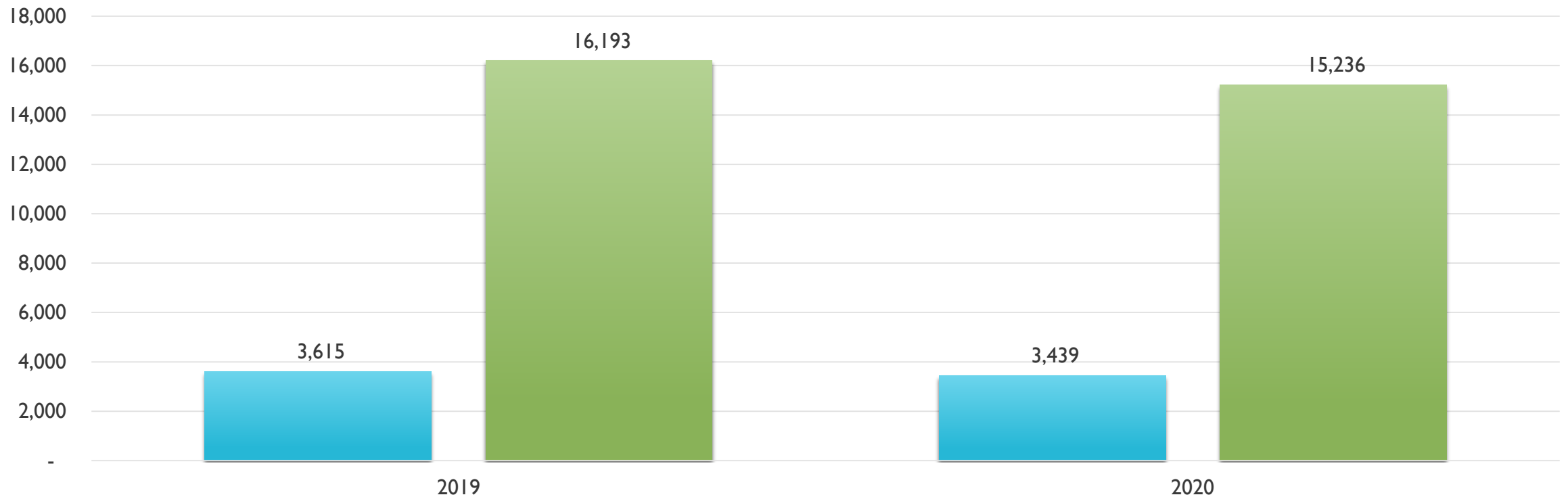
THE LIVES OF THOSE IMPACTED

- Kendra
- Susan

PROTECTIVE ORDERS

Protective Orders Filed

■ Multnomah ■ Statewide

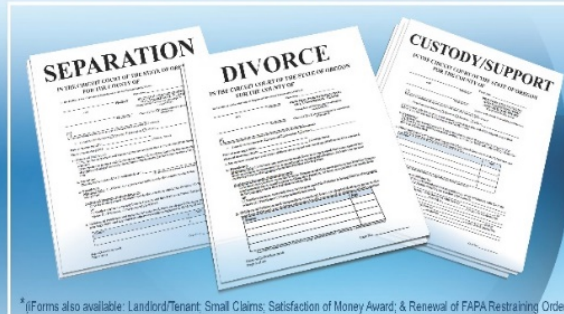


REMOTE FILING FOR PROTECTIVE ORDERS

- During the pandemic, OJD launched a remote filing service by creating “Quick Review Queue”
- We are working with justice partners to ensure effective operation of this service

Don't Have a Lawyer? Self-Represented?

Interactive FAMILY LAW FORMS ONLINE for:*



*iForms also available: Landlord/Tenant; Small Claims; Satisfaction of Money Award; & Renewal of FAPA Restraining Order

Oregon Judicial Department iForms *make completing court forms simple:*

1. Type in answers to online “interview” questions
2. iForms produces your completed form
3. eFile the form using iForms or print & submit to the court by mail or in person



www.courts.oregon.gov/iForms

OJD Guide & File

What You'll Need

1. All related information: names, addresses, correspondence & documents (pdf format)
2. A credit card if you are going to eFile an iForm that requires a fee
3. The ability to download and save your copy of the iForm
4. Access to a printer if you need to file at the courthouse
5. Watch the “How To” video. Help information is provided throughout the interview process

Then click “Start Your Legal Process” to select a form and begin the interview!

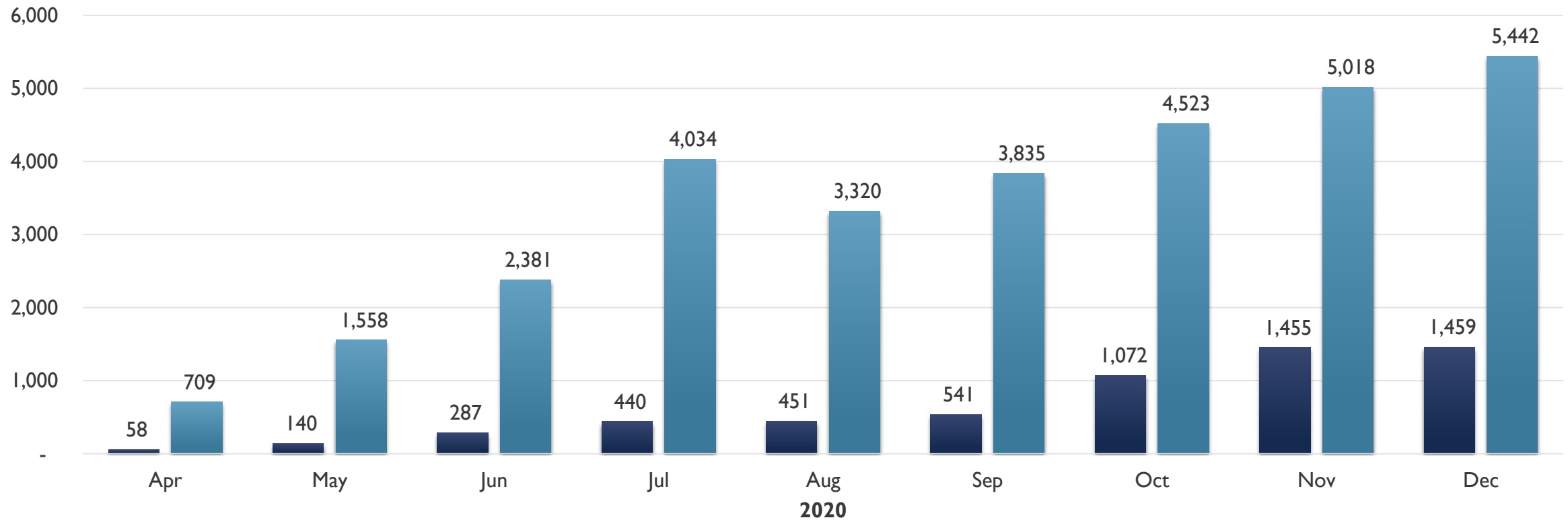
[Start Your Legal Process](#) ▶



REMOTE PROCEEDINGS

Webex Hearings Held in Circuit Courts

■ Multnomah ■ Statewide



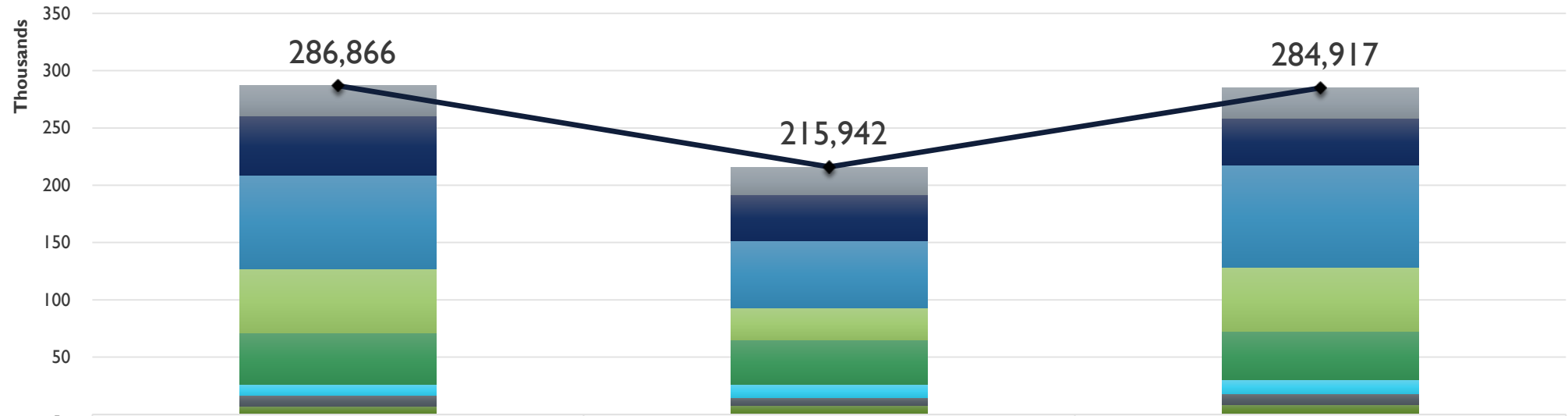


LOOKING AHEAD

NANCY COZINE, STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

CASE FILINGS EXPECTED TO 'BOUNCE BACK' POST-COVID

Circuit Court Case Filings (excludes Violations)



| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 Projected |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Felony | 26,598 | 24,220 | 26,587 |
| Misdemeanor | 51,536 | 40,077 | 41,018 |
| Civil | 81,768 | 58,695 | 88,754 |
| Small Claims | 56,091 | 27,942 | 56,100 |
| Domestic Relations | 44,414 | 38,822 | 42,420 |
| Probate | 9,926 | 11,228 | 11,933 |
| Juvenile | 9,449 | 7,087 | 9,449 |
| Civil Commitment | 7,084 | 7,871 | 8,657 |
| Total | 286,866 | 215,942 | 284,917 |

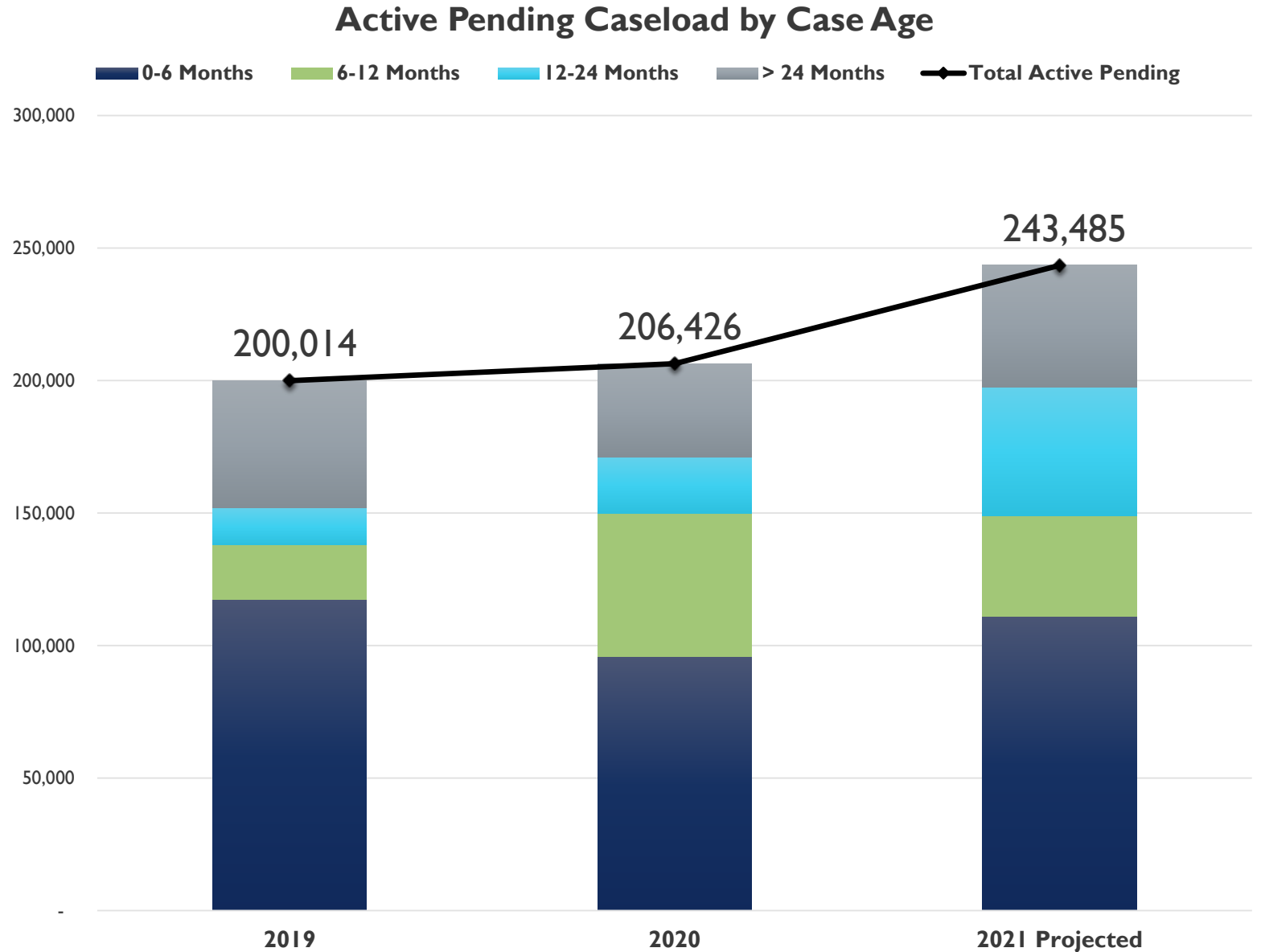
LOOKING AHEAD – 2021 PROJECTED CASELOADS

2020

- Filings decreased by 37%
- Pending caseload increased by 3%
- Pending cases taking longer to resolve and case age increases

2021

- Wave of new filings expected
- New filings will increase pending caseload
- Existing pending backlogs need to be worked
- Case age will continue to increase until courts can catch up



LOOKING AHEAD – ISSUES ON THE HORIZON

- Addressing Racial Justice and Equity in the Criminal Justice System
- Ballot Measure 110
- Substance Abuse and Addiction Crises
- Expungement/Expunction (Juvenile)
- Juvenile Justice Reforms
- Child Welfare Needs
- Housing

OJD BILLS - 2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION HOUSE BILLS

- **Fairness in Court Collections (HB 2176).** Repeals the \$50 minimum charge to set up a payment plan, modifies the Chief Justice's authority over courts and divisions to waive or suspend payment plan fees, and authorizes compromise (settlement) of financial obligations in criminal judgments other than restitution or compensatory fines.
- **Criminal Case Initiation Fees (HB 2177).** Allows the Chief Justice to charge reasonable fees to counties for the cost of providing electronic filing services for felony and misdemeanor cases. Applies only in counties where the District Attorney files more than 500 felony cases per calendar year. Supports OJD's tech fund.
- **Reducing Tax Court Fees (HB 2178).** Reduces statutory filing fee in Magistrate Division to \$50 and specifies time by which petitioner must pay filing fee if the fee waiver request is denied by the court, establishing the date of filing as the date of dispatch.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

www.courts.oregon.gov

- Courts
- Hours
- Contact information
- Services
- Court records
- Court calendars
- Self-help information and forms

Contact:

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QUESTIONS?

Thank you!

