



Hon Jim D. James



Hon Michael L. Howard



Hon Rosemarie A. Hall

ANNUAL REPORT

2016

Stark County Family Court

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Mission

Stark County Family Court promotes a safe and healthy community by protecting and supporting children and families.

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From the Court

STARK COUNTY FAMILY COURT

In 2016, Stark County Family Court closed over 3000 juvenile complaints and approximately 1200 juvenile traffic cases. In addition, the court handled over 1200 divorces and dissolutions and 98 domestic violence issues. All of these cases were presided over by the three Family Court Judges and the appointed six full time and 2 part time Magistrates.

The Court added an additional specialized docket during 2016. The *Family Dependency Treatment Court* (FDTC) was developed to assist a parent in jeopardy of losing, or who has lost custody of their child (children) due to substance use/abuse issues. Stark County Family Court recognizes the devastating effects of addiction on the family unit and implemented this docket to provide structured assistance to Stark County families in need.

Ongoing specialized dockets continued to successfully run in 2016. The *Working Together For Kids* program provided never married parents the ability to mediate support and custody issues without formal Court involvement. The *Juvenile Drug Court* offered a restorative justice option for juveniles struggling with substance use/abuse issues. Teen Court continued to operate as the Court's principal diversion program for 2016.

Judge Michael L. Howard retired from the bench December 2016. He served this Court for 30 years beginning as an Intake Officer, promoted to a Magistrate and in 2004 elected as Judge. Judge Howard possesses a passion for serving the "greater good" as his volunteer efforts are too many to name. His "Trauma Informed Care" work is known locally, throughout the state and the country. Judge Howard's recognition of how trauma effects behavior became his battle cry. He believes the most effective sentencing options should carry with them, the recognition of trauma. Judge Howard fully supported the efforts of developing a Court department to screen for the effects of trauma. One of the key responsibilities for the Court's Behavioral Health Services department is to do just that. Judge Howard's endeavors allowed for trauma screening to be conducted on all youth brought to detention. Screening results are available to hearing officers as dispositional decisions are made. Judge Howard tirelessly championed Stark County Family Court to become "trauma informed". Although retired from the bench, Judge Howard is busier now than before his retirement. He remains active in all of his volunteer efforts, continues to serve the Court as the chairperson to the Court's Trauma Informed Care committee and continues his local, state and national efforts to helping youth achieve success. Judge Howard's leadership was respected, his knowledge welcomed and his service applauded. Judge Howard's contributions helped to guide and shape this court into a "Court of Significance".

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Technical Developments

The Court continues to take steps toward becoming “greener”. With each passing year the Court has become “environmentally friendlier” and 2016 is no exception. Technology has allowed for advances inside and outside the Courtrooms.

In order to facilitate more effective and better communication, the Judges have facilitated the design and implementation of display boards in the main waiting areas within the Courthouse. These boards allow for the display of court dockets as well as reflecting last minute changes of hearing officers and/or courtrooms. They can also serve as a medium for greetings as well as broadcasting emergency instructions such as evacuations or other such events.

More streamlined communication was implemented for Court’s field officers with a tablet pilot program. The Court deployed Microsoft Surfaces to both Pretrial and Probation Officers. This deployment was an effort to provide real time information to Officers in the field. These devices, coupled with smartphones already in the field, allowed Officers to access the Internet from virtually anywhere while out of the office.

Moving forward, the Court is looking to digitize Human Resource forms such as sick/vacation time requests and timesheets. These forms will exist within the County’s network and will be available to all employees when needed. This undertaking will reduce the need for paper forms, lessen the use of printers and allow for a more efficient submission process. Another big project in the upcoming year will be the pilot program for the County’s virtual desktop integration program (VDI). Stark County Family Court will be one of the initial county departments to pilot this initiative. This VDI program will allow end users the ability to work from anywhere there is Internet access on whatever device they choose to connect. Users will see a seamless transition from their office desktop to a mobile device. This will increase the ability of the field deployed PC’s exponentially as they will have access to all county resources.

Stark County Family Court expends a tremendous amount of effort to keep families whole and generate safety for the community. In 2016 the Court continued to demonstrate efforts toward such. The Court demonstrated on-going collaboration with state and community agencies who are also committed to addressing the needs of Stark County youth and families.

In compliance with Ohio Revised Code 2151.18, Stark County Family Court respectfully submits its 2016 Annual Report.

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Department Staffing

Three Judges preside over Stark County Family Court. Judge Jim James is the Administrative Judge of the Juvenile Division, Judge Michael Howard, the Administrative Judge of Domestic Relations Division and Judge Rosemarie Hall make up the judicial leaders. Serving under the Judges are the Family Court Magistrates.

The Family Court Administrative department handles the day-to-day operations of the Court, all Human Resources responsibilities, annual budgeting, special projects planning and deployment, majority of grant writing and technological advancements. The Family Liaison Specialist also works through the Administrative department. She is responsible for Supervised Visitation and Mediation Programs.

The Assignment Department handles the scheduling of all cases referred to the Court; is responsible for school of origin determinations; managing all background check requests; and scheduling the *Working Together for Kids* program. The Assignment department works closely with the Clerk of Courts, attorneys and pro se filers.

The Intake Department is responsible for the review of all juvenile cases. They work with the Juvenile Division of the County Prosecutor's Office and the Clerk of Courts by notifying the parties to each case, setting up hearings, gathering background information and ensuring detention hearings run.

In 2016 the Pretrial Release Officers were moved from under the Intake Director's supervision to the supervision of the Behavioral Health Services Director. This department provides supervision to juveniles awaiting future court dates. In lieu of detention, a juvenile may be supervised by court personnel while being maintained in the community. In 2016 the Pretrial Release Department served 433 juveniles. These were youth that would have otherwise served time in detention.

The Juvenile Probation department works out of offices in Canton, Massillon and Alliance. In an effort to reduce recidivism, this department supervises and recommends intervention services for Court involved juveniles. Assessments determine the needs of each youth and Probation Officers help to facilitate treatment efforts. Out of home placement options are recommended by Probation staff when community resources have been exhausted and successful outcomes will be more probable as compared to present circumstances. In 2016, Probation added "At-tuned Inn". This is a fully functional house that allows youth involved in the Probation Department's Work Connections program to learn and practice life skills.

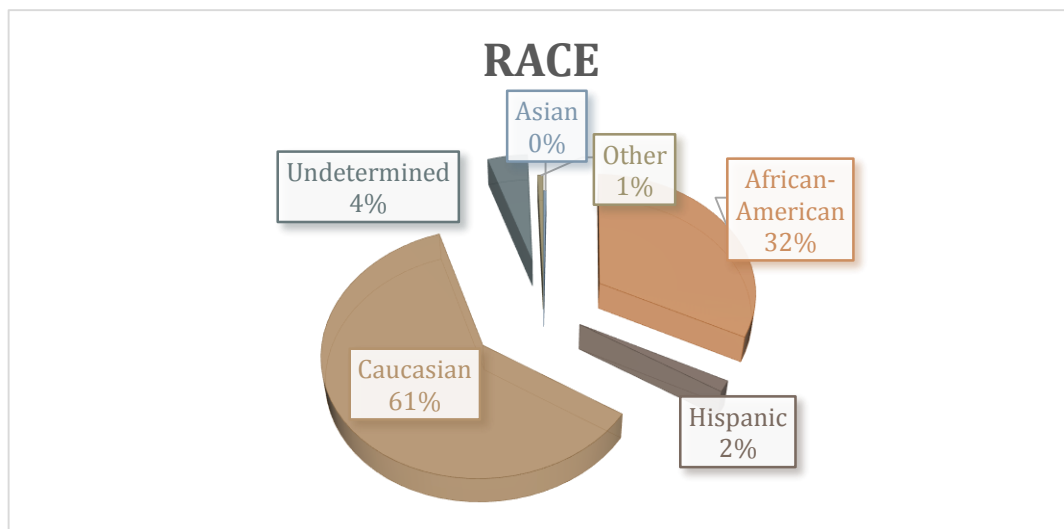
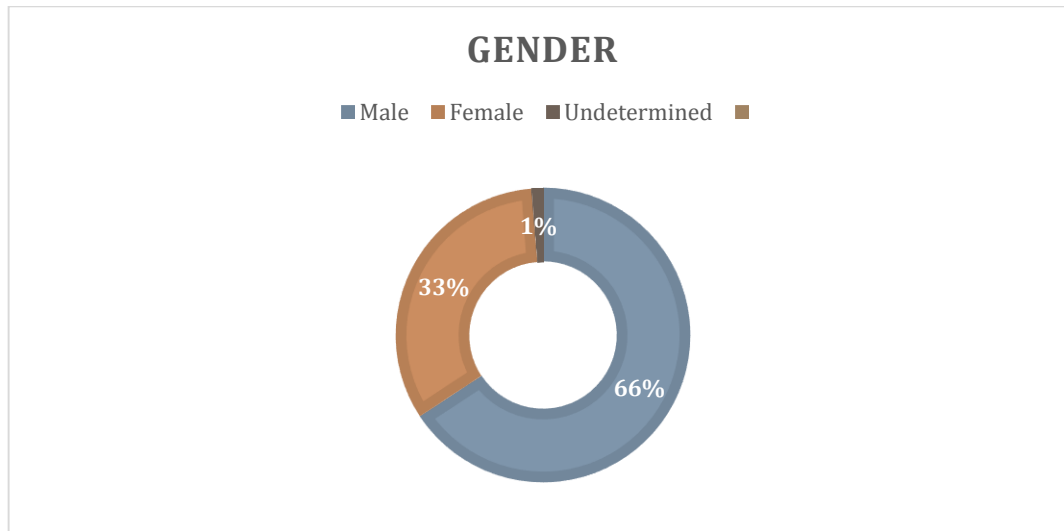
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The CASA Department is comprised of The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and Abuse, Neglect and Dependent (AND) Department. The CASA program provides services in both Stark and Carroll Counties. This program trains volunteers for the Court Appointed Special Advocates for children who need this service. This department also coordinates the Citizens Review Board. In 2016, CASA utilized 60 volunteers to service 300 children within 177 families. 53 per-cent of those children in need of services were 5 years-old or younger.

Behavioral Health Services is a department organized to meet the increasing challenges of serving youth with mental health and substance use/abuse issues. This department aims to bridge the gap between court involved youth and families with community service providers to get help where help is needed. 2016 was the first operational year for Behavioral Health Services and the impact was seen immediately. 457 youth were screened for mental health needs upon entering detention. 265 referrals were made to outside agencies and 9 youth underwent competency restorations within this department. This new department aims to bridge the gap between court involved youth and families with community service providers to get help where help is needed.

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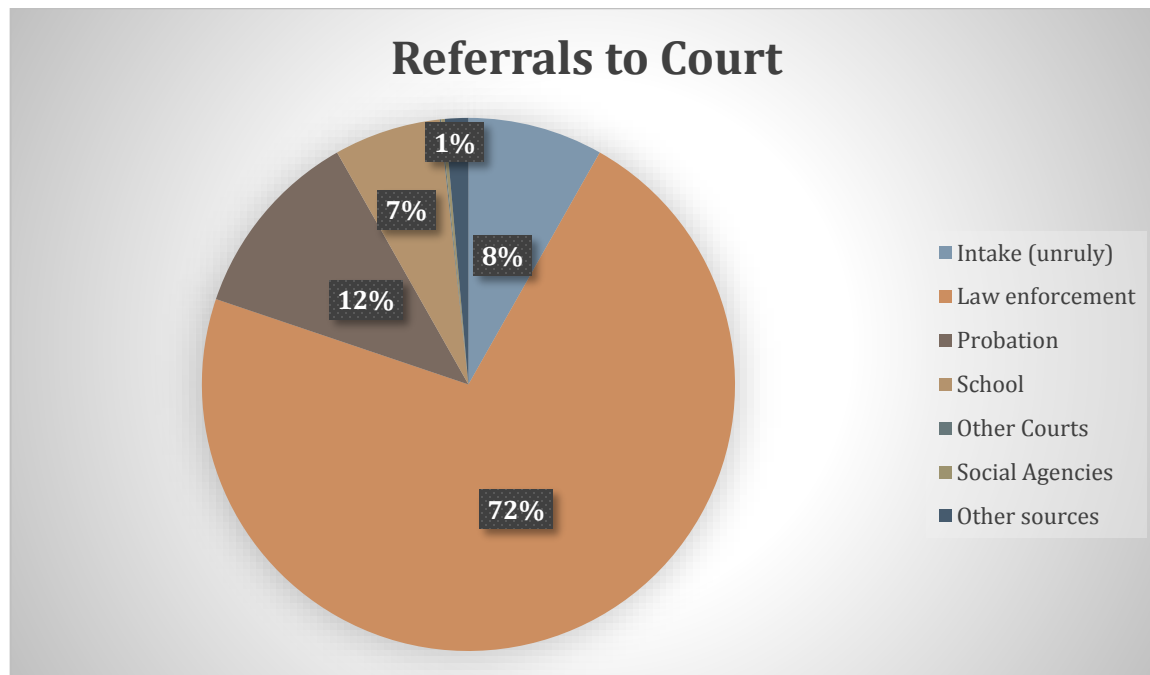
Referral Demographics



These graphs represent the race and sex of juveniles who are charged with delinquencies and referred to Stark County Family Court.

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Juvenile Referrals



This graph illustrates the referrals to Family Court.

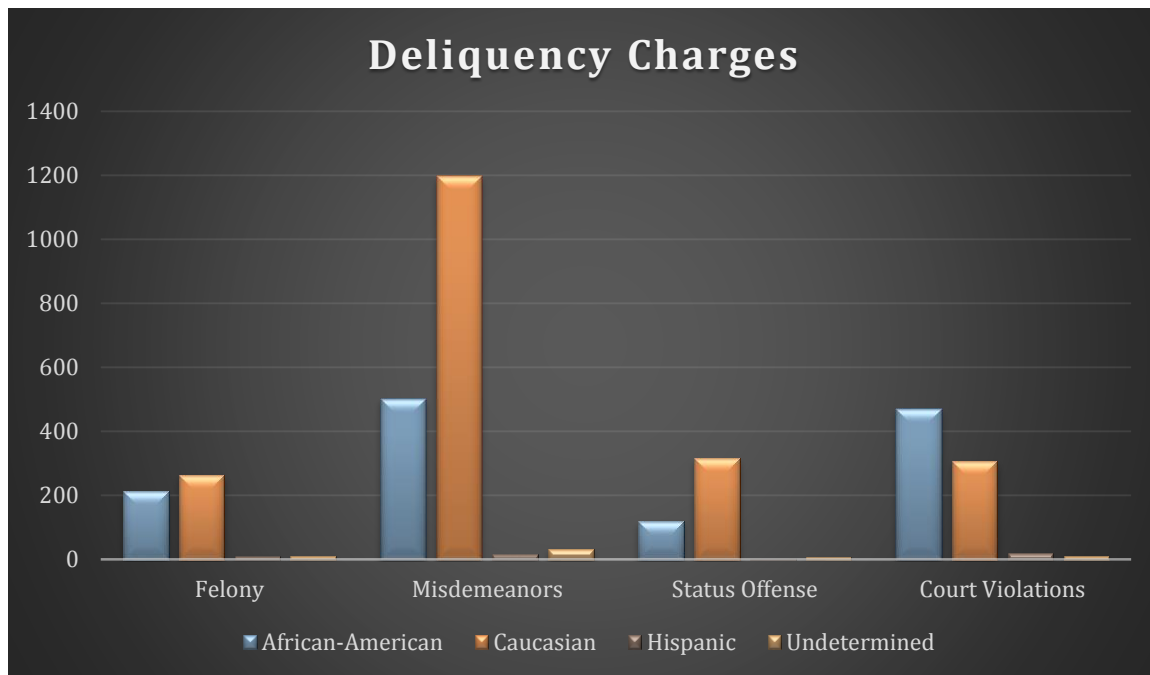
As depicted by the graph, Law Enforcement (Law enforcement referrals come from all law enforcement agencies in Stark County. This also includes the State Highway Patrol, the Stark County Sheriff's Office as well as city and municipality police forces.) made up the bulk of Court referrals for 2016.

The Juvenile Probation Department and the Ohio Department of Youth Services department of Parole referrals were the second largest referral source. These referrals are with regards to juveniles on probation and in violation of court orders.

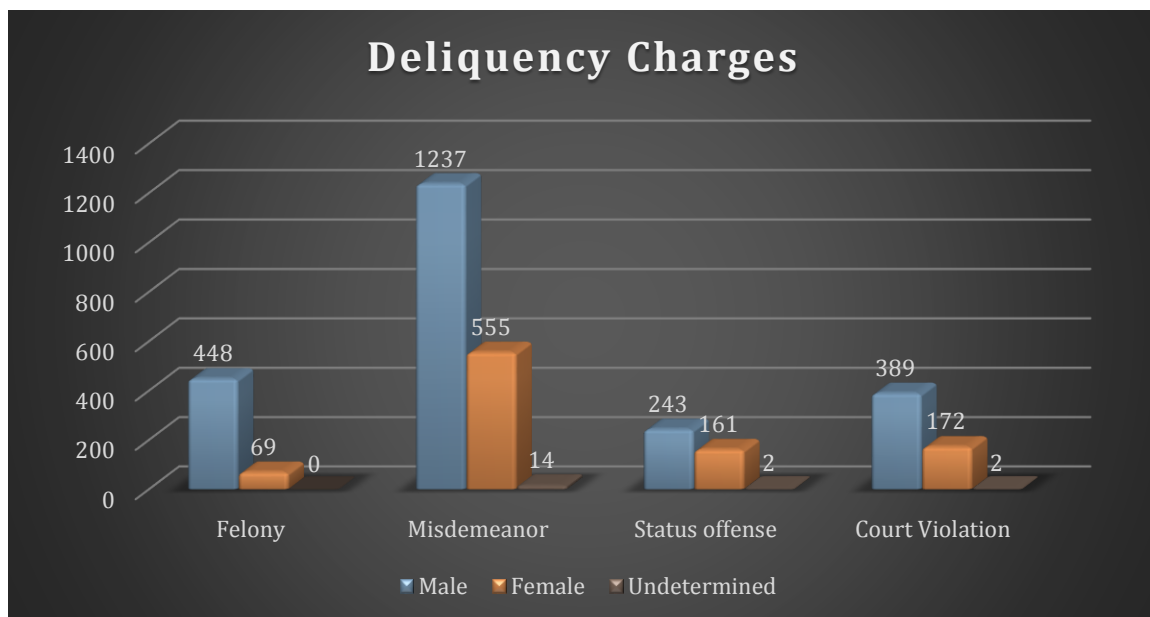
Intake (unruly) was the third most populous source on the list. Stark County schools truancy violations as well as Contributing to the Unruliness or Delinquency of a Minor followed closely behind Intake/unruly referrals. Truancy violations are filed only after the exhaustion of all informal options.

The remainder of referral sources are social agencies such as the Department of Job and Family Services, and referrals from other courts (The referrals from other courts would come in the form of cases sent to Stark County for adjudication.).

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This graph represents charges brought to Stark County Family Court. It does not reflect final dispositional charges or dismissed cases. The graph reflects initial filings. Adults with a JCR case type were omitted.



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Offense		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Property Offenses	Total	552	520	454	386	667
Aggravated Burglary		6	4	4	5	3
Burglary		21	24	17	12	25
B&E		17	8	7	9	29
Criminal Trespass		68	32	44	74	107
Theft		265	295	231	102	239
Felony Theft		18	21	32	18	21
Receiving and Concealing		31	25	23	56	64
Forgery		1	1	1	6	6
UUMV		3	3	5	13	10
Arson		8	14	10	13	7
Vandalism		18	12	11	6	12
Criminal Damaging		59	38	38	32	90
Criminal Mischief		26	20	20	30	36
Unauthorized use of Prop		0	0	0	0	1
Possession Criminal Tools		2	2	0	9	10
Misuse of Credit Card		1	0	1	1	7
Other property offenses		8	21	10		
Violent Offenses	Total	415	381	361	544	537
Aggravated Murder		0	0	0	0	0
Murder and Vol Manslaughter		0	1	0	1	0
Vehicular Homicide		0	1	1	0	1
Assault		168	158	138	188	125
Felonious Assault		18	13	15	27	48
Domestic Violence		179	164	156	244	212
Aggravated Robbery		11	12	8	9	25
Robbery		7	4	12	10	7
Aggravated Menacing		13	16	13	33	24
Menacing		18	9	15	28	32
Kidnapping		0	1	2	4	4
Other violent offenses		1	2	1		59
Sex Offenses	Total	28	15	38	76	65

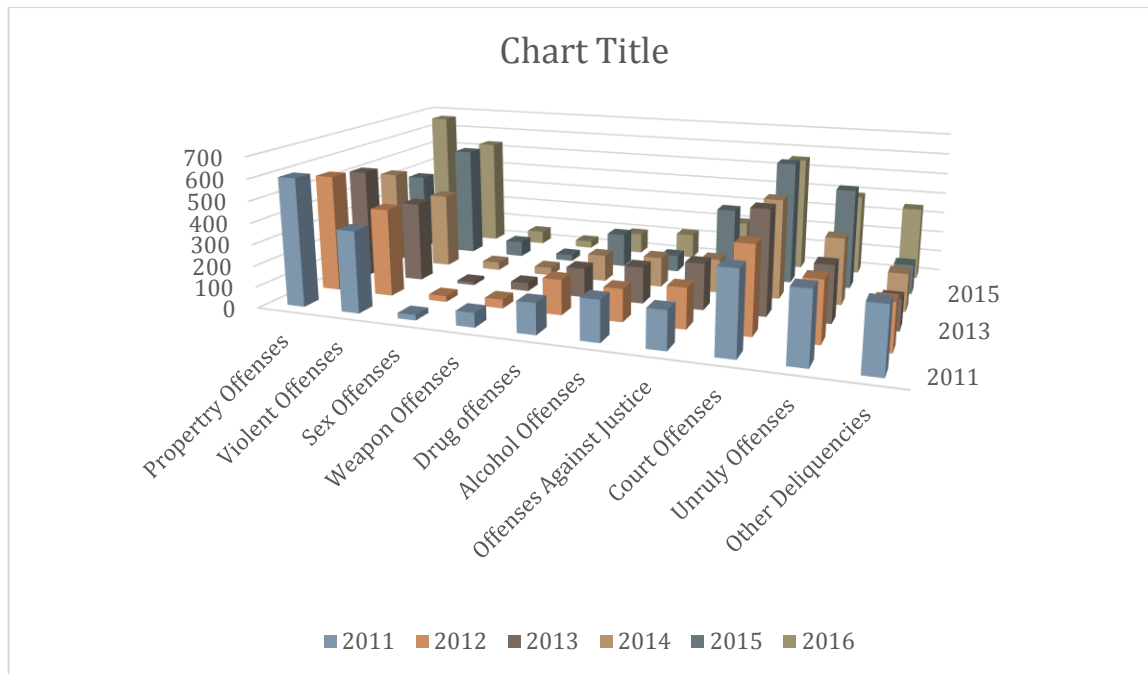
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Rape	15	5	17	22	21
Gross Sexual Imposition	6	5	8	25	25
Sexual Imposition	4	3	4	11	1
Felonious Penetration	0	0	0	0	0
Other sex offenses	3	2	9	18	18

Offenses Con't	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Weapon Offenses Total	42	39	38	31	36
Carrying Concealed Weapon	4	5	10	16	12
Possession Deadly weapon	14	14	12	0	1
Improper Handling: MV	0	0		4	5
Other	24	20	16	11	18
Drug Offenses Total	165	139	128	165	100
Trafficking	20	11	9	7	10
Drug Abuse	69	84	83	55	76
Drug Paraphernalia	70	39	36	33	11
Harmful Intoxicant	1	1	0	0	0
Counterfeit Drugs	0	0		0	0
Other Drug Offenses	5	4	0	70	3
Alcohol Offenses Total	153	173	144	80	121
DUI	4	8	3	8	1
Underage Consumption	149	165	141	72	120
Offenses Against Justice Total	189	219	162	338	207
Disorderly Conduct	117	125	67	129	37
Resisting Arrest	0	0	0	48	35
Inducing Panic	0	0		11	14
False Alarms	1	2	2	5	5
Riot	0	2	0	17	10
Disrupting Public Service	0	0		14	4
Obstructing Justice	1	1	4	5	2
Failure to Comply	3	8	0	14	3
Other Offenses - Justice	67	81	89	95	97
Court Offenses Total	408	493	473	590	557
Violation of Court Order	405	485	461	585	545
Escape	3	8	12	5	12
Other Delinquent Offenses Total	219	145	178	142	349

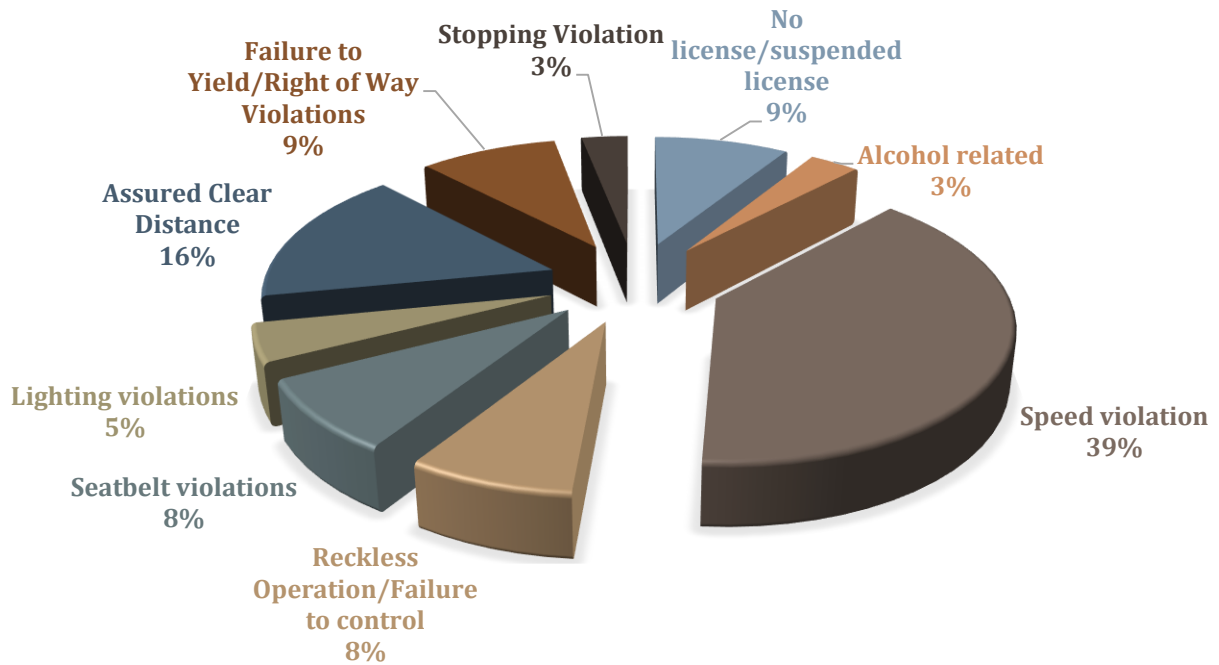
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Telephone Harassment	0	0		12	8
Chronic Truancy	135	121	156	130	161
Other Offenses	84	24	22		180
Unruly Offenses Total	285	269	317	480	390
Habitual Truancy- diversions	0	0	41		2
Curfew	50	47	30	81	89
Unruly Child	235	222	246	399	299
Law Pertaining to Minors	0	0			
Cases Closed Totals	2,456	2,393	2,293	2,832	3,029



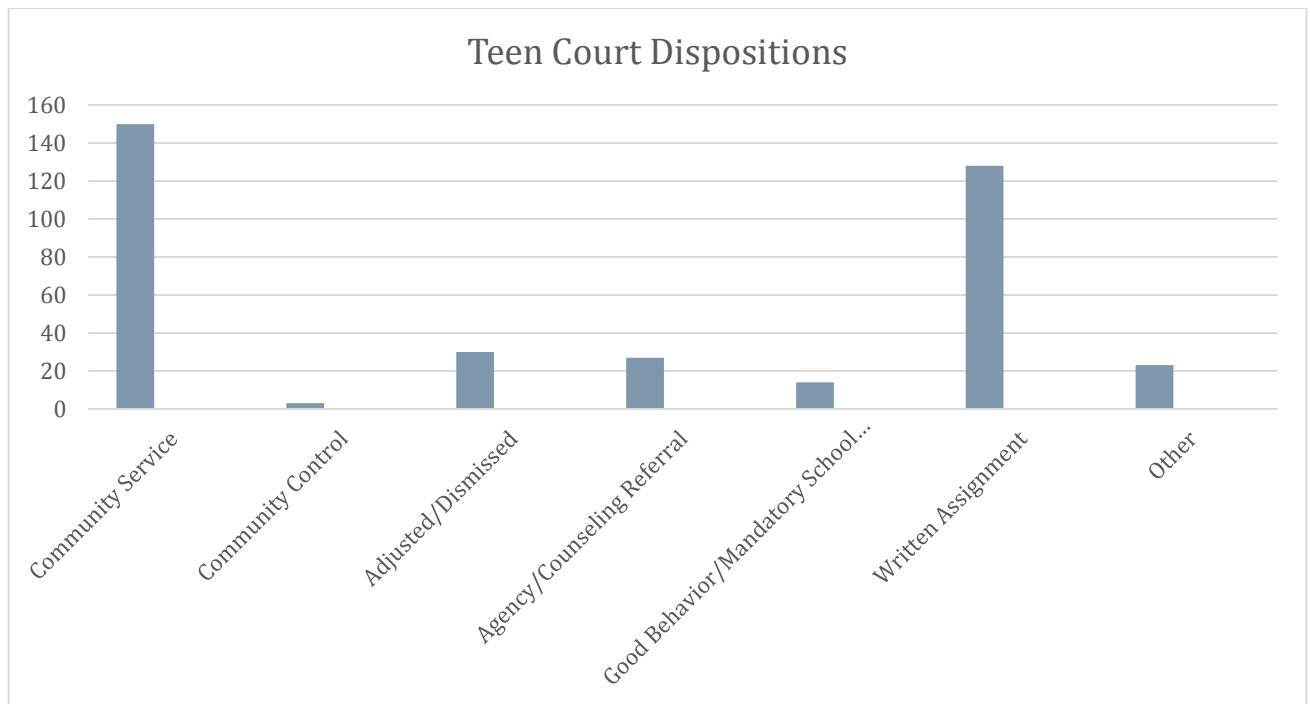
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JUVENILE TRAFFIC OFFENSES



This graph represents juvenile traffic violations.

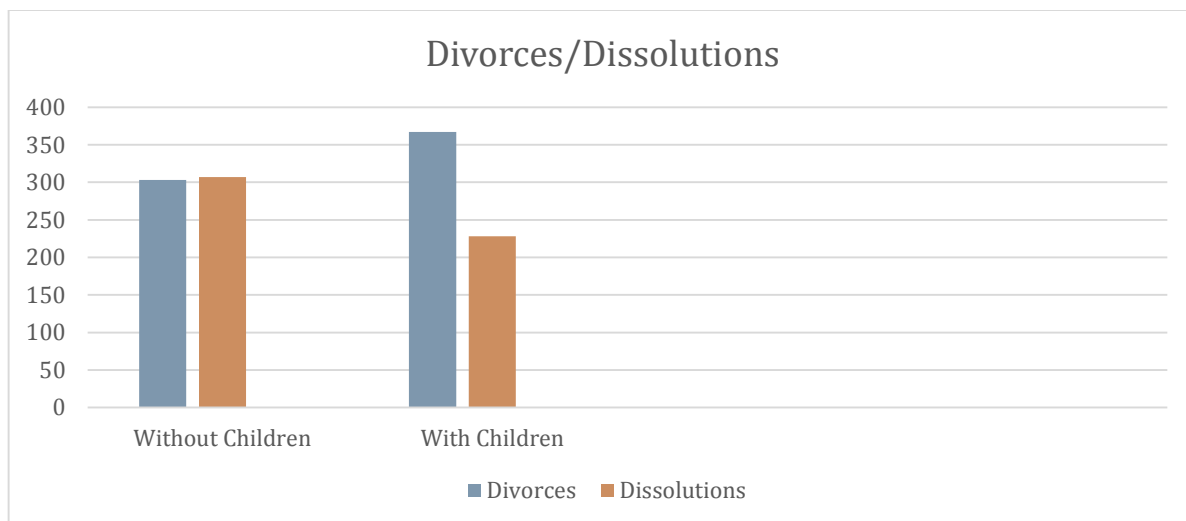
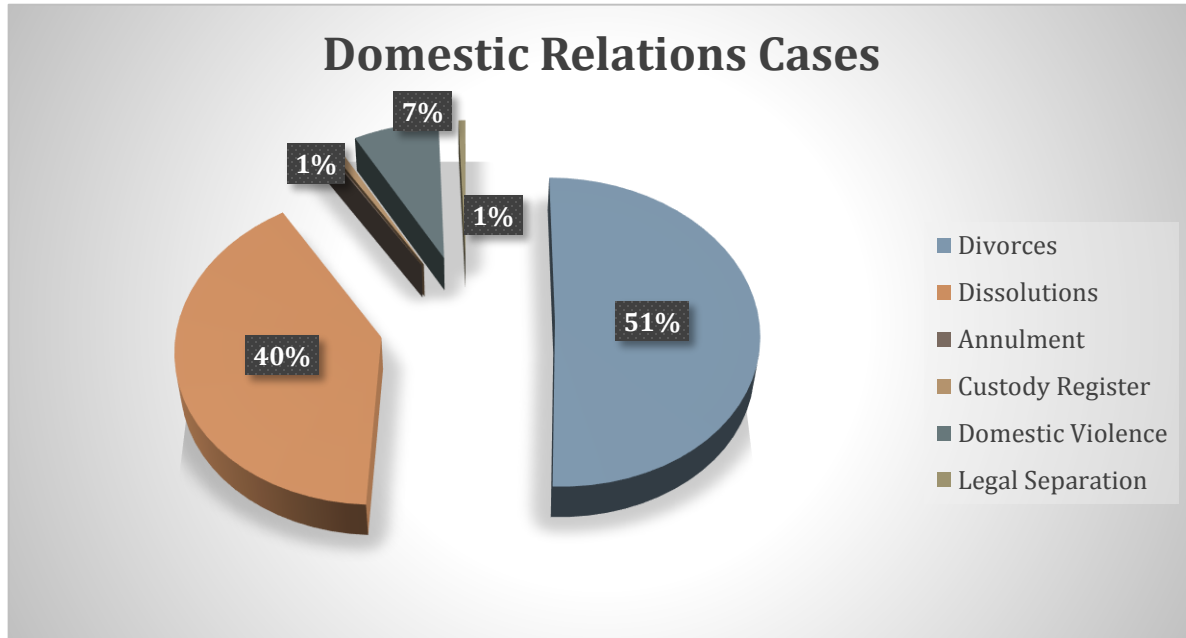
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In 2016, the Teen Court program closed 400 Informal cases making it the largest Court program to process Informal hearings. Support was offered in the form of referrals to community agencies and help was given where needed. Restorative justice was exercised in the form of community service and any restitution to be made to victims. This graph represents the dispositions from Teen Court cases in 2016.

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Domestic Relations



The graphs illustrate the Domestic Relations case types handled by Stark County Family Court. Over half of these cases were divorces with a majority involving children. Dissolution cases, not involving children were the next highest number. Domestic violence issues were 7% of this docket while legal separations and custody registers were each 1%.

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