



Hon Jim D. James



Hon Michael L. Howard



Hon Rosemarie A. Hall

ANNUAL REPORT

2015

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 the year 2015 Stark County Family Court saw and closed 3,665 juvenile delinquency complaints and over 1,154 juvenile traffic cases. The court also handled 1,266 divorces and dissolutions, 152 domestic violence cases, 870 issues regarding custody and child support and 635 cases involving dependent, abused and/or neglected children. All of these cases were presided over by the three Family Court Judges and eight magistrates.

In 2015 Teen Court continued to operate as the Court's largest program designed to divert cases from the court docket. This restorative justice program found youth volunteers hearing 369 cases that would have been added to the official docket of the Court. The *Working Together for Kids* program was able to help unmarried parents come to mediated agreements regarding custody and child support without formal court intervention. Drug Court was also successful in treating and graduating drug-free juveniles.

In 2015, the Family Court faced increased challenges in dealing with mental health and addiction. To help meet the needs of Stark County residents, the Court created a Behavioral Health Department staffed with a licensed alcohol and drug specialist and a licensed mental health and trauma specialist. This department is tasked with performing detention screenings to identify trauma, risk and alcohol and drug use. They also perform court-ordered assessments and competency restorations. The creation and utilization of this department will give the Court the ability to gather the information necessary to help develop treatment plans for the youth we serve.

Throughout its history, Stark County Family Court has worked to keep families whole while maintaining the safety of the community, and it continued to do so in 2015. The Court makes decisions after careful consideration of the best interests of the child and the family involved. As the needs of the community change, the Court will evolve to address those needs.

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code section 2151.18, the Court submits the following Annual Report to the Stark County Board of Commissioners.

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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** completes the judicial leadership team. Serving under these Judges are eight Family Court Magistrates. These Magistrates, who are experienced Family Law attorneys, are appointed to hear most types of cases on the Family Court docket. Their decisions are subject to review by the judges.

The **Family Court Administrative Department** is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Court, including all human resource matters, supervision, funding, payroll and budgeting.

The **Assignment Department** handles the scheduling of all cases as they are referred to the Court.

The **Intake Department** receives all complaints involving juveniles charged with unruly or delinquency offenses. The department is responsible for proper service of process, background research, coordination with schools and agencies involved with the youth and scheduling court dates or diversion. The department maintains statistical information which assists in the formation of this report as well as other state mandated reports. The Intake Department staff includes **Pre-trial Release Officers**. The officers provide supervision to juveniles awaiting future court dates. In lieu of detention, a juvenile may be maintained in the community but under the supervision of court personnel.

The **Juvenile Probation Department** provides community control for adjudicated delinquent youth. Probation Officers work county-wide out of offices in Canton as well as satellite offices in Massillon and Alliance. The Probation Department supervises juveniles who are court-involved and it facilitates services within the community to reduce recidivism. Using federal funding from Title IV-E, the Family Court is able to fund treatment programs targeted at keeping youth in their homes and out of placement. When a juvenile's home life is too unstable to ensure a successful outcome, Probation Officers explore residential placement. They are assigned to help the youth successfully re-enter the community at the conclusion of such a placement.

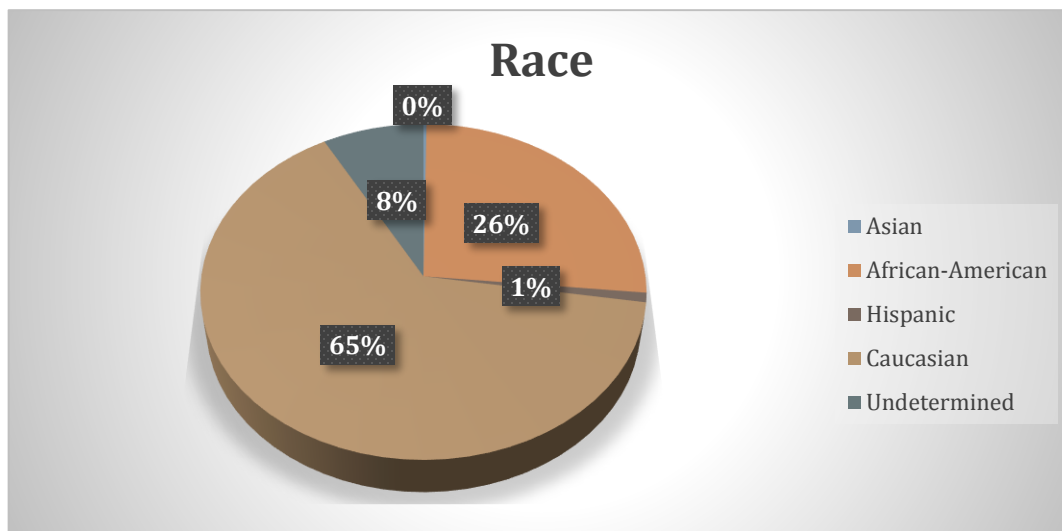
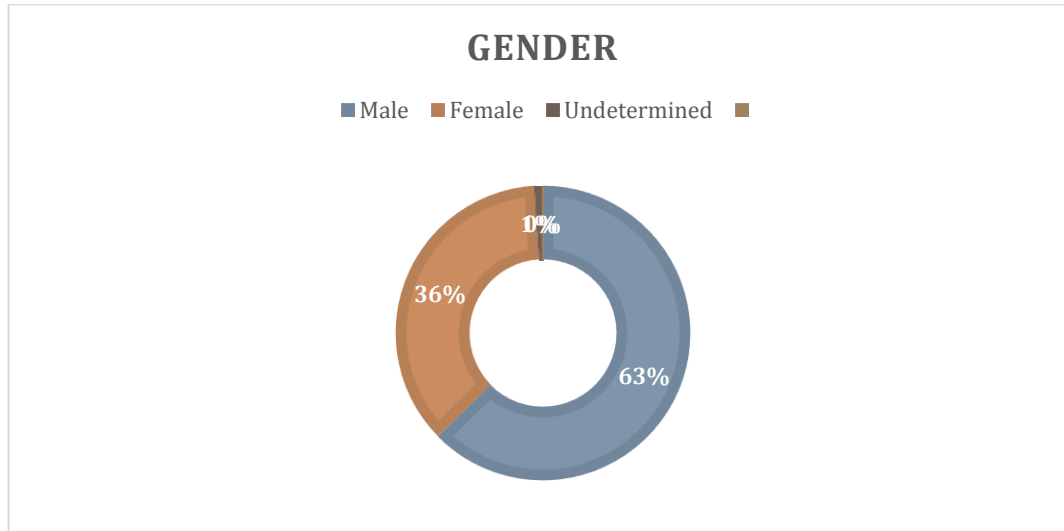
The **Behavioral Health Department** screens all youth for trauma, mental health, alcohol and drug treatment needs. This professionally staffed department refers youth to appropriate agencies and coordinates behavioral health services.

The **CASA Department** (Court Appointed Special Advocate) is a program that provides volunteer advocates for children alleged or adjudicated as Abused, Neglected or Dependent. In 2014, the Family Court utilized grant funding from Ohio CASA and the Ohio Attorney General to expand its services for these children. In 2015 the court was able to continue this expansion using funding from a Victims of Crime grant. The CASA program provides services in both Stark and Carroll Counties. This program trains volunteers as Court Appointed Special Advocates to advocate in court for children. This department also coordinates the Citizens Review Board, one of three in the State of Ohio, where volunteers review the progress of children in foster care.

Mediation, Supervised Visitation, Family Wizard and Parent Coordination are all responsibilities of the **Family Liaison Specialist**.

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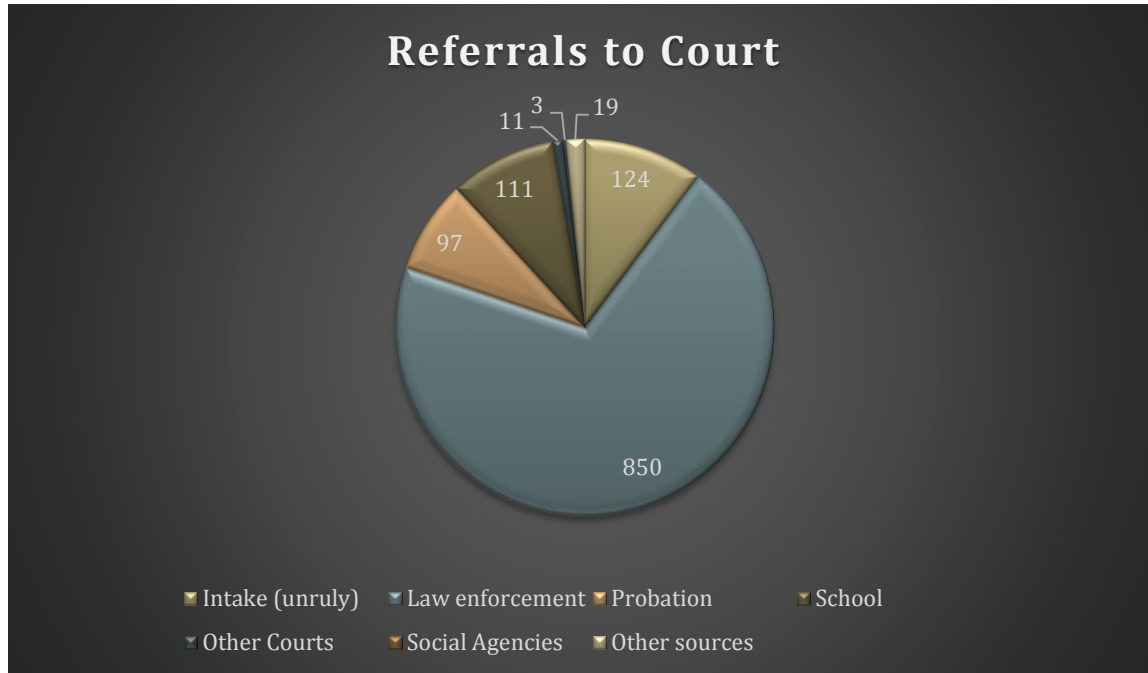
Referral Demographics



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

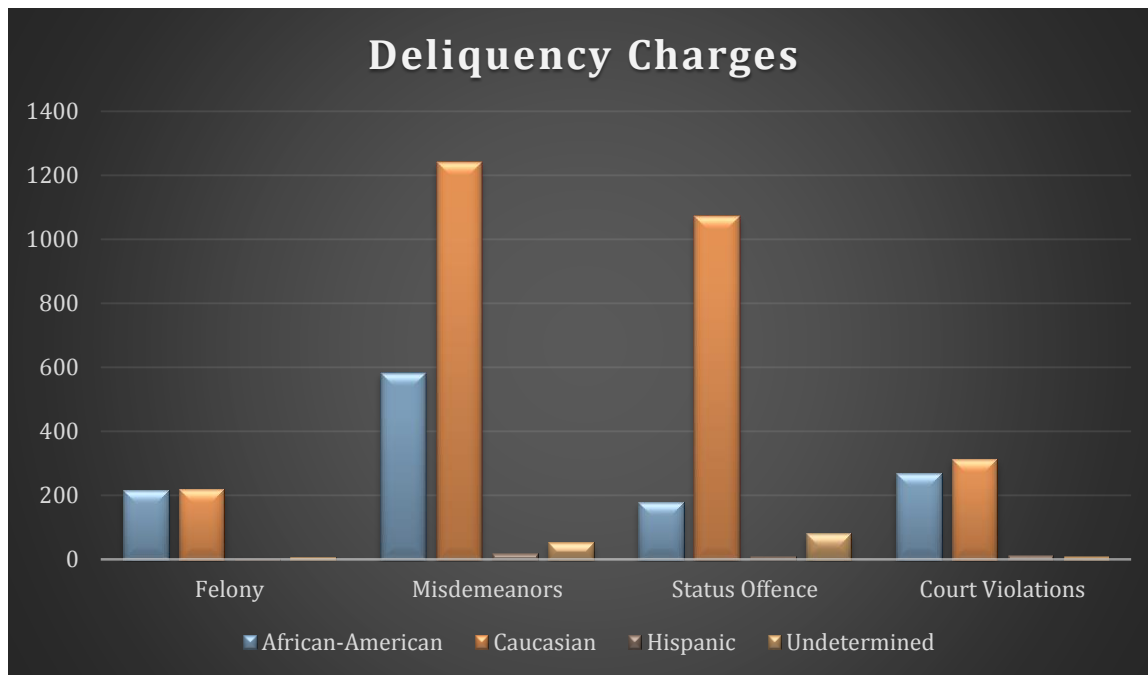
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Juvenile Referrals

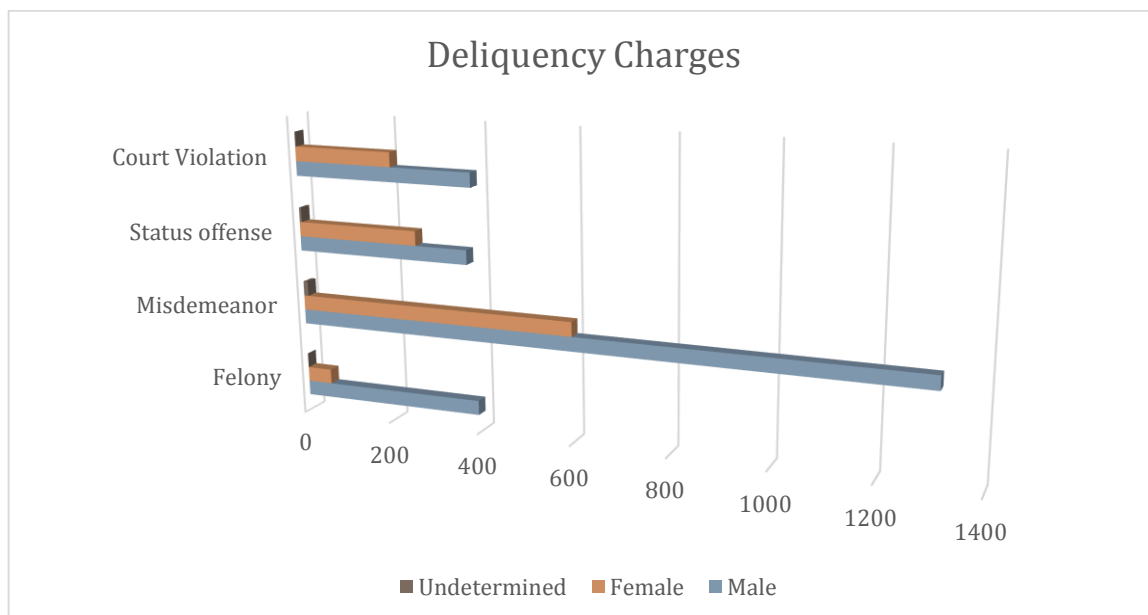


This graph illustrates that the bulk of the referrals to Family Court in 2015 came from law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement referrals come from all law enforcement agencies in Stark County. This includes the Ohio State Highway Patrol, the Stark County Sheriff's Office, city and municipal police forces as well as ODNR and Stark Parks. Community member initiated unruly complaints filed through the Court's Intake Department generated ten percent of the referrals. Referral sources include schools in Stark County that file truancy violations with the court. These violations are filed only after informal options have been tried without success. These referrals result in Truancy charges as well as charges against adult caretakers for Contributing to the Unruliness of the truant child. Complaints are also filed by the Juvenile Probation Department and the Ohio Department of Youth Services Parole Officers when juveniles violate probation or parole rules. These account for eight percent of the referrals. The remainder of the referral sources would be from social agencies such as the Department of Job and Family Services, and referrals from other courts. If an offense is committed in another county but the child lives in Stark County, the Court where the offense occurred will certify the case to Stark County Family Court for final disposition.

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This graph represents charges that were filed in 2015 with the Stark County Family Court. It does not reflect final amendments or dismissals that may have occurred prior to final disposition. Charges against adults such as Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor or Child Endangerment are omitted.



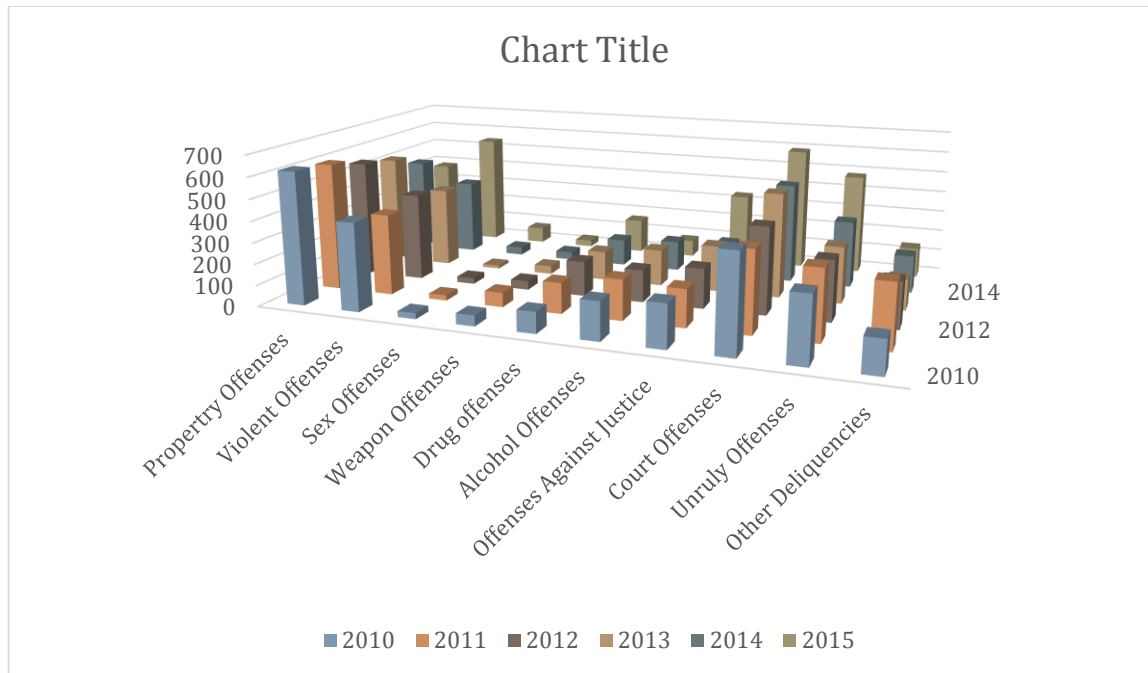
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Offense		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Property Offenses	Total	622	600	552	520	454	386
Aggravated Burglary		7	0	6	4	4	5
Burglary		29	25	21	24	17	12
B&E		13	17	17	8	7	9
Criminal Trespass		59	58	68	32	44	74
Petty Theft		300	363	265	295	231	102
Felony Theft		29	23	18	21	32	18
Receiving and Concealing		31	19	31	25	23	56
Forgery		0	1	1	1	1	6
UUMV		12	4	3	3	5	13
Arson		6	11	8	14	10	13
Vandalism		22	14	18	12	11	6
Criminal Damaging		55	39	59	38	38	32
Criminal Mischief		40	20	26	20	20	30
Unauthorized use of Prop		0	0	0	0	0	0
Possession Criminal Tools		4	0	2	2	0	9
Misuse of Credit Card		1	1	1	0	1	1
Other property offenses		14	5	8	21	10	
Violent Offenses	Total	413	382	415	381	361	544
Aggravated Murder		1	1	0	0	0	0
Murder and Vol Manslaughter		0	1	0	1	0	1
Vehicular Homicide		1	0	0	1	1	0
Assault		168	159	168	158	138	188
Felonious Assault		9	20	18	13	15	27
Domestic Violence		185	160	179	164	156	244
Aggravated Robbery		6	5	11	12	8	9
Robbery		15	8	7	4	12	10
Aggravated Menacing		15	16	13	16	13	33
Menacing		10	11	18	9	15	28
Kidnapping		1	1	0	1	2	4
Other violent offenses		2	0	1	2	1	
Sex Offenses	Total	28	25	28	15	38	76
Rape		14	19	15	5	17	22
Gross Sexual Imposition		6	3	6	5	8	25
Sexual Imposition		0	1	4	3	4	11
Felonious Penetration		0	0	0	0	0	0
Other sex offenses		8	2	3	2	9	18

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Offenses Cont.		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Weapon Offenses	Total	50	68	42	39	38	31
Carrying Concealed Weapon		5	11	4	5	10	16
Possession Deadly weapon		8	13	14	14	12	0
Improper Handling: MV		0	0	0	0		4
Other		37	44	24	20	16	11
Drug Offenses	Total	99	144	165	139	128	165
Trafficking		19	12	20	11	9	7
Drug Abuse		41	70	69	84	83	55
Drug Paraphernalia		33	55	70	39	36	33
Harmful Intoxicant		0	0	1	1	0	0
Counterfeit Drugs		0	0	0	0		0
Other Drug Offenses		6	7	5	4	0	70
Alcohol Offenses	Total	178	190	153	173	144	80
DUI		1	0	4	8	3	8
Underage Consumption		177	190	149	165	141	72
Offenses Against Justice	Total	200	177	189	219	162	338
Disorderly Conduct		109	122	117	125	67	129
Resisting Arrest		3	0	0	0	0	48
Inducing Panic		0	0	0	0		11
False Alarms		3	1	1	2	2	5
Riot		0	0	0	2	0	17
Disrupting Public Service		0	0	0	0		14
Obstructing Justice		1	2	1	1	4	5
Failure to Comply		3	2	3	8	0	14
Other Offenses - Justice		81	50	67	81	89	95
Court Offenses	Total	448	381	408	493	473	590
Violation of Court Order		439	377	405	485	461	585
Escape		9	4	3	8	12	5
Other Delinquent Offenses	Total	155	298	219	145	178	142
Telephone Harassment		0	0	0	0		12
Chronic Truancy		128	109	135	121	156	130
Other Offenses		27	189	84	24	22	
Unruly Offenses	Total	303	328	285	269	317	480
Habitual Truancy- diversions		0	0	0	0	41	
Curfew		65	57	50	47	30	81
Unruly Child		238	271	235	222	246	399
Law Pertaining to Minors		0	0	0	0		
Cases Closed	Totals	2,496	2,593	2,456	2,393	2,293	2,832

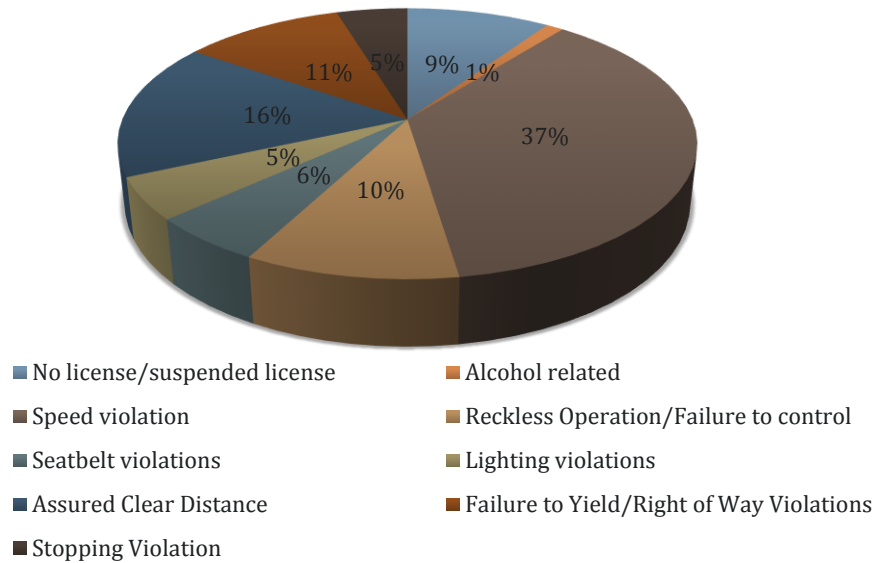
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These statistics for 2015 were the result of a consolidation of the Family Court database with the Stark County Clerk of Court's database. This consolidation allowed for a more accurate reporting of charges and offense types. As a result of improved data collection, the number of charges in some categories were under-represented in prior years on the graph. For example, Domestic Violence charges were not reported separately. Overall, delinquency cases increased by 19% in 2015, but felony charges continued to decline.

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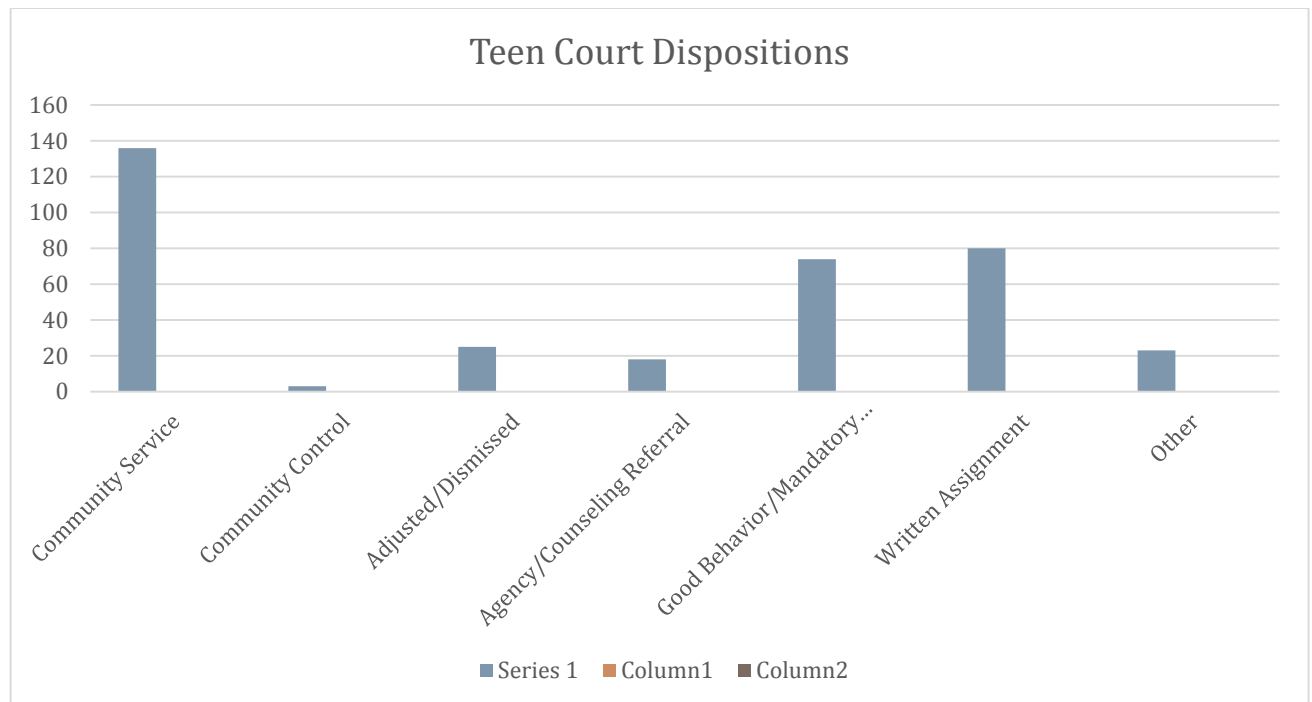
Juvenile Traffic Offences



This graph represents the referrals for traffic violations by juveniles.

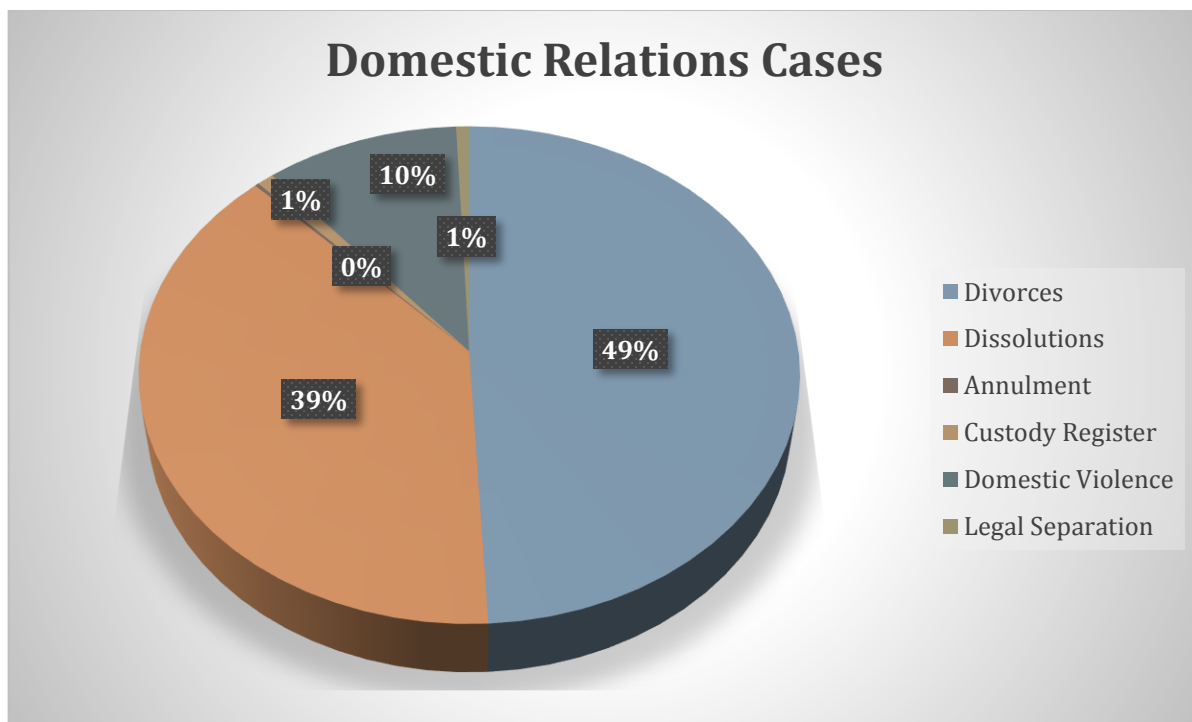
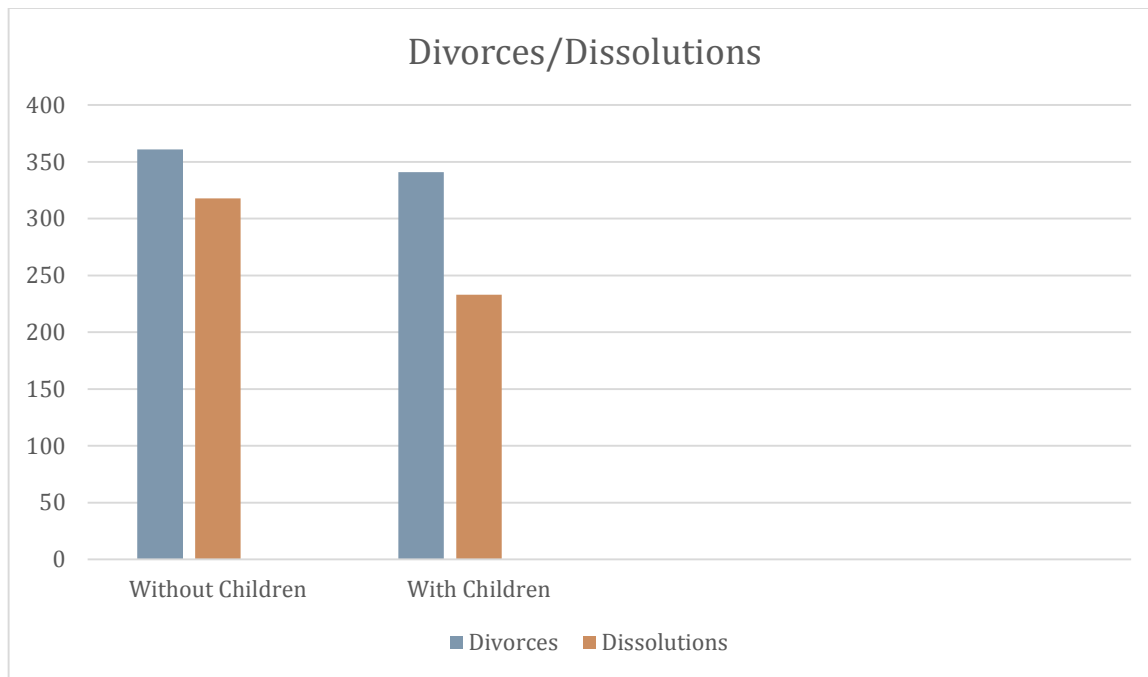
Other traffic offenses that were referred to court but would have made up less than 1% of referrals were Driving Past Curfew violations, Excessive Passenger violation and Texting/Phone use while driving.

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Teen Court is the Court's largest diversion program, conducting informal hearings that give the juvenile the opportunity to avoid a formal record if they are cooperative sanctions levied by a jury of their peers. In 2015, the Teen Court program closed 369 Informal cases. These were cases that did not appear on the official juvenile docket, yet were used as "teachable moments" with juvenile offenders and their families. The program makes referrals to community agencies and offers support in other areas where needed. Teen Court follows the principles of restorative justice often ordering community service and restitution to victims. This graph represents the dispositions from Teen Court cases in 2015.

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