



**COURTS OF
COMMON PLEAS**
Domestic Relations Division

Domestic relations divisions of the courts of common pleas have jurisdiction over all proceedings involving divorce or dissolution of marriages, annulment, legal separation, spousal support and allocation of parental rights and responsibilities for the care of children. The domestic relations divisions of the courts of common pleas exist in most counties together with another division. The following counties have separately administered domestic relations divisions:

Allen	Lake	Muskingum
Butler	Licking	Portage
Clermont	Lucas	Richland
Cuyahoga	Mahoning	Scioto
Fairfield	Medina	Summit
Greene	Montgomery	Warren
Hamilton		

Domestic relations cases are grouped into three general categories of cases:

Marriage Terminations and Dissolutions

Marriage Terminations and Marriage Dissolutions involve the cessation of a marriage relationship. Both of these case categories are further broken down for caseload reporting purposes depending on whether the married couple seeking a divorce or dissolution has any children.

Post-Decree Case Types

Following the cessation of a marriage, further activities can occur subsequent to the final decree and are classified under either the Change of Custody, Visitation Enforcement or Modification (Visitation), or Support Enforcement or Modification categories (Support). In some instances, a person may file a motion under more than one of these categories. For statistical reporting purposes, such matters are counted only under the category of the earliest filed motion. When that motion is resolved, the matter is reclassified under the case type for the motion filed after the first, and so on.

Miscellaneous Case Types

The remaining domestic relations case types are:

- Domestic Violence – Petitions for civil protection orders
- Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (U.I.F.S.A.) cases
- Parentage
- All Others – Cases not otherwise classifiable in other case-type categories.

Caseloads

The core work performed in domestic relations courts involves divorces and dissolutions. In 2014, Ohio's domestic relations courts reported a total 44,492 incoming divorce and dissolution cases. This represents a decrease of four percent over 2013 and a 14-percent decline from the 10-year high of 51,764 cases in 2006. Incoming caseloads across the state in all case types from 2005 through 2014 are shown in a table in the *Appendix*.

Of particular note is the differential in the rates in which new divorce and dissolution filings involve married couples with children and married couples without children. (See **Figure 1**). Between 2005 and 2010, a generally equivalent amount of cases were presented each year. However, beginning in 2011, more cases not involving children began being filed than cases that do. As seen in the chart, the gap has widened considerably.

FIGURE 1

Marriage Terminations and Dissolutions Total incoming cases

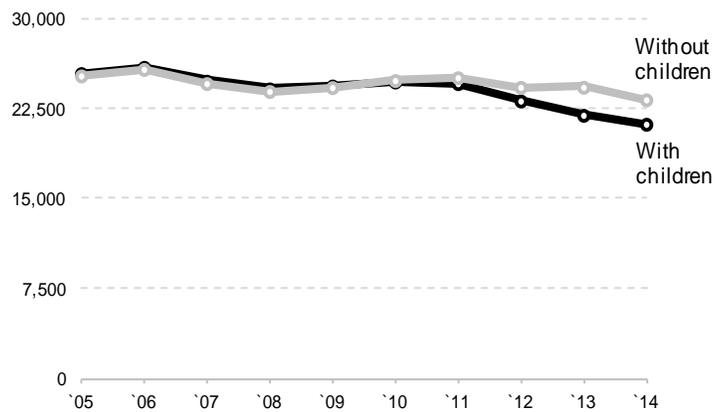
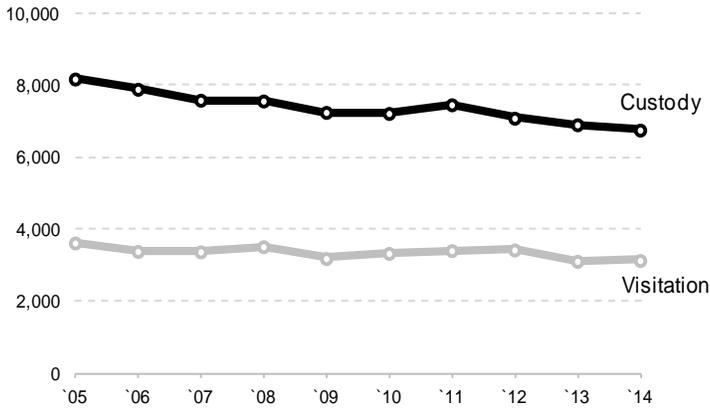


FIGURE 2

Custody and Visitation Cases

Total incoming cases



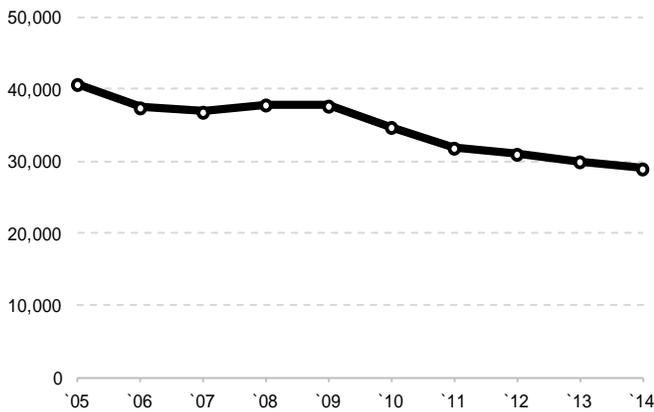
Since 2005, the number of motions filed each year seeking a change of custody has experienced a general downward trend. During 2014, a total of 6,761 filings were reported, representing a decrease of 2 percent over 2013 and a decline of 17 percent over the 10-year high in 2005 of 8,179 cases. The rate of filing of incoming Visitation matters has remained relatively stable, although a slight downward trend can be discerned. (See **Figure 2**).

Of note is the contrast in the number of post-decree matters involving children (Custody and Visitation) and the number of Support matters. It follows that because fewer marriage terminations involving children are being filed, fewer Custody and Visitation matters are subsequently being presented. Support matters, not strictly involving the presence of children, would be expected to demonstrate less of a decline. Nevertheless, between 2005 and 2014, the number of filings seeking the enforcement or modification of a support order declined by 29 percent. (See **Figures 2 and 3**).

FIGURE 3

Support Cases

Total incoming cases



Performance Measures

For a description of court performance measures used by the Supreme Court, see *page 3*.

As shown in **Table 1**, average monthly clearance rates in 2014 for all case types except Visitation exceeded 100 percent. Average monthly overage rates over each of the last five years are shown in **Table 2**. While the overage rates for divorces and dissolutions along with several other case types in 2014 are well below 10 percent, the overage rates for Domestic Violence, Custody, U.I.F.S.A., Visitation, and All Others are above 10 percent. Due to the limitations in the Supreme Court's reporting instructions and time guidelines for Domestic Violence and U.I.F.S.A. cases, the overage rates for those cases can appear spuriously elevated, and without conducting additional research at the local court level, the reader is cautioned against interpreting these as accurate measures of the courts' actual case processing timeliness performance for those particular case types.

TABLE 1

Clearance Rates

Average per month in 2014

Case Type	Monthly Average
All Others	104%
Change of Custody	101%
Domestic Violence	100%
Marriage Dissolutions w/Children	102%
Marriage Dissolutions w/o Children	100%
Marriage Terminations w/Children	102%
Marriage Terminations w/o Children	103%
Parentage	105%
Support - Enforce or Modify	102%
U.I.F.S.A.	105%
Visitation - Enforce or Modify	99%

TABLE 2

Overage Rates

Percent of caseload pending past time guidelines, average per month

Case Type <i>(Time guideline, in months)</i>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
All Others ⁽⁶⁾	15%	17%	18%	16%	15%
Change of Custody ⁽⁹⁾	13%	12%	13%	12%	11%
Domestic Violence ⁽¹⁾	35%	33%	36%	36%	34%
Marriage Dissolutions w/Children ⁽³⁾	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%
Marriage Dissolutions w/o Children ⁽³⁾	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Marriage Terminations w/Children ⁽¹⁸⁾	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Marriage Terminations w/o Children ⁽¹²⁾	6%	6%	5%	6%	5%
Parentage ⁽¹²⁾	4%	4%	5%	6%	4%
Support - Enforce or Modify ⁽¹²⁾	6%	6%	5%	4%	4%
U.I.F.S.A. ⁽³⁾	34%	26%	25%	26%	25%
Visitation - Enforce or Modify ⁽⁹⁾	14%	13%	13%	13%	12%