



**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 dissolution or termination 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 2015, Ohio's domestic relations courts reported a total 43,698 incoming divorce and dissolution cases. This represents a decrease of 2 percent since 2014 and a 16-percent decline from the 10-year high of 51,764 cases in 2006. Incoming caseloads across the state in all case types from 2006 through 2015 are shown in a table in the *Appendix*.

Of particular note is the difference between new divorce and dissolution filings involving married couples with children and married couples without children. Between 2006 and 2010, a generally equivalent amount of cases were presented each year. However, beginning in 2011 more cases began being filed that do not involve children than cases that do. As seen in **Figure 1**, the gap between the two groups has widened.

FIGURE 1

Marriage Terminations and Dissolutions

Total incoming cases

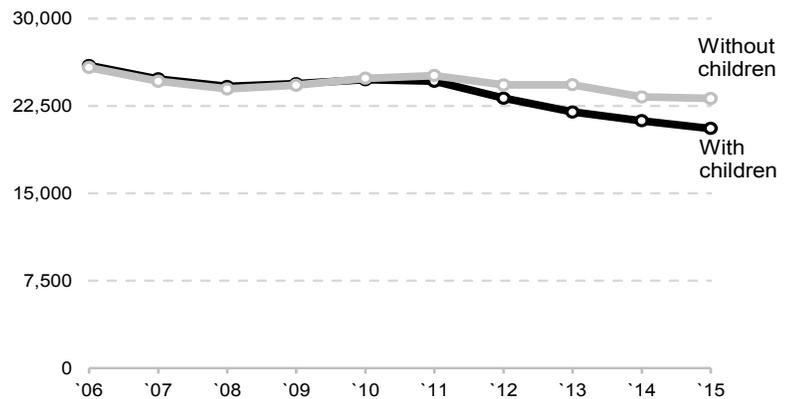
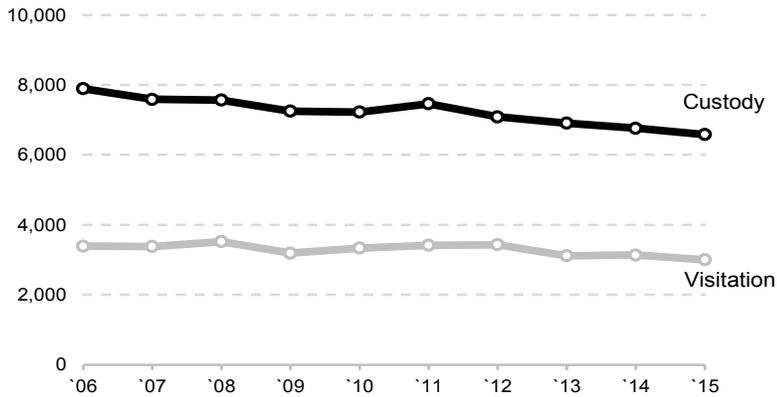


FIGURE 2

Custody and Visitation Cases

Total incoming cases

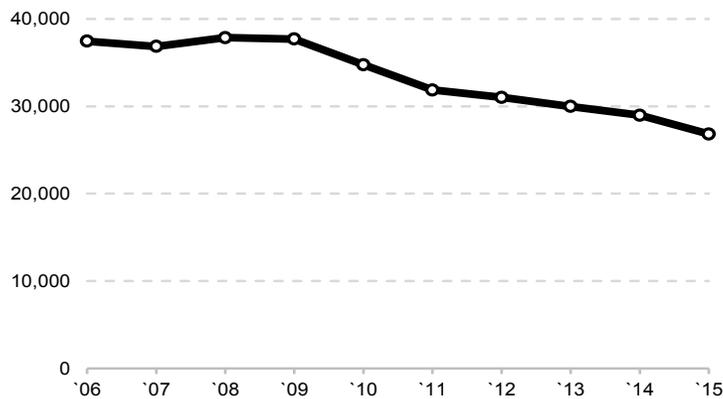


Post-decree matters in domestic relations courts have also experienced a decline in the past ten years. During 2015, a total of 6,582 motions seeking a change of custody were filed, representing a decrease of 3 percent from 2014 and a decline of 17 percent from the 10-year high of 7,895 cases in 2005. The rate of filing of incoming visitation matters has remained relatively stable over 10 years. (See **Figure 2**). Between 2006 and 2015, the number of filings seeking the enforcement or modification of a support order declined by 23 percent. (See **Figure 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 2015 for all case types reached at least 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 2015 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 particularly 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 2015

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

TABLE 2

Overage Rates

Percent of caseload pending past time guidelines, average per month

Case Type <i>(Time guideline, in months)</i>	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
All Others <i>(6)</i>	17%	18%	16%	15%	15%
Change of Custody <i>(9)</i>	12%	13%	12%	11%	13%
Domestic Violence <i>(1)</i>	33%	36%	36%	34%	34%
Marriage Dissolutions w/Children <i>(3)</i>	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%
Marriage Dissolutions w/o Children <i>(3)</i>	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Marriage Terminations w/Children <i>(18)</i>	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Marriage Terminations w/o Children <i>(12)</i>	6%	5%	6%	5%	5%
Parentage <i>(12)</i>	4%	5%	6%	4%	6%
Support - Enforce or Modify <i>(12)</i>	6%	5%	4%	4%	5%
U.I.F.S.A. <i>(3)</i>	26%	25%	26%	25%	22%
Visitation - Enforce or Modify <i>(9)</i>	13%	13%	13%	12%	13%