

GENERAL DISTRICT COURT

Court Services

Description

The General District Court exercises original jurisdiction over all misdemeanor cases and has jurisdiction over civil matters where less than twenty-five thousand dollars is involved. Preliminary hearings in felony cases are also conducted in this court. The average monthly caseload for the Court is 10,000 new cases. In addition to new cases, the Clerk's Office processes an average of 3,000 witness subpoenas, 300 requests for certified copies of prior convictions, 350 requests for restricted licenses, 80 protective orders, 1,000 garnishments, 800 requests for civil abstracts, and 800 writs of possession monthly. The Clerk's Office also assists citizens with phone inquiries and in-person visits averaging 6,000 phone calls and 1,000 walk-ins monthly. General District Court judges preside over traffic cases and certain violations of the County Code. There are five judges serving in this court, having been appointed by the General Assembly for a term of six years. The judges, clerk, and deputy clerks are all paid directly by the Commonwealth. The County provides space, furniture, and support for the General District Court.

- To maintain an accurate accounting of court funds.
- To provide adequate maintenance, storage, and retrieval of court records.

Budget Highlights

The General District Court's FY2017-18 approved budget of \$305,313 represents an increase of \$59,237 or 24.1 percent from the FY2016-17 approved budget. Most of the increase is attributed to the personnel costs for 3 hourly, part-time positions. These positions will assist with data entry, docket preparation, answering phones, and any other duties to help alleviate workload pressure.

The approved operational budget increased \$5,412 to accommodate the costs associated with new and updated phone lines added to the court rooms. The operational budget is utilized to support the daily activities of the General District Court, which consists of five courtrooms and administrative offices, occupied by five judges and 34 employees. The fifth judge was appointed by the General Assembly during the 2015 session and began November 1, 2015. The permanent staff of the General District Court is comprised entirely of state employees, so all permanent personnel costs are paid by the Commonwealth of Virginia and are not reflected in this budget.

Objectives

- To ensure the efficient operation of the General District Court through support of the activities of the Clerk's office.
- To maintain accurate and timely court records.

Annual Fiscal Plan

<u>Description</u>	<u>FY16 Actual</u>	<u>FY17 Original</u>	<u>FY18 Approved</u>	<u>Change 17 to 18</u>
Personnel	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 53,825	0.0%
Operation	233,433	246,076	251,488	2.2%
Capital	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	\$ 233,433	\$ 246,076	\$ 305,313	24.1%
Personnel Complement	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

General District Court Services (cont'd)

	Performance Measures			Change
	FY16	FY17	FY18	17 to 18
Workload Measures				
Total New Cases Filed	103,310	126,822	126,822	0
Total New Criminal Cases Filed	14,574	13,967	13,967	0
Total New Civil Cases Filed	34,411	39,300	39,300	0
Total New Traffic Cases Filed	54,325	73,555	73,555	0
Number of Full-Time Judges	5	5	5	0

*Note: These estimates are prepared by State Supreme Court personnel.
