

CIRCUIT COURT SERVICES

DESCRIPTION

The Circuit Court of Henrico County (Fourteenth Judicial Circuit) is the trial court of general jurisdiction with the authority to try a full range of civil, chancery/equity, and criminal cases.

In civil cases, the Circuit Court exercises concurrent jurisdiction with the General District Court in money claims of one to twenty-five thousand dollars, and original jurisdiction for claims over twenty-five thousand dollars. Also included on the civil docket are condemnation trials.

In criminal cases, the Circuit Court has jurisdiction over the trials of misdemeanor and felony cases – offenses punishable by confinement in jails or other correctional institutions. Court costs and fines are assessed in court against those charged.

The Circuit Court also exercises jurisdiction in domestic and other chancery/equity cases. This includes all divorce matters, as well as disputes concerning wills and estates, guardianships, and partition suits.

The Circuit Court exercises appellate jurisdiction over appeals of civil and criminal matters from the Henrico Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court and the Henrico General District Court. Circuit Court judges also hear appeals from certain administrative agencies in the Commonwealth and Henrico County.

OBJECTIVES

- To administer justice fairly, according to applicable laws, in a timely manner.
- To operate an efficient and effective court system in the administration of justice for the citizens of Henrico County.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 SUMMARY

Annual Fiscal Plan

<u>Description</u>	<u>FY21 Actual</u>	<u>FY22 Original</u>	<u>FY23 Approved</u>	<u>Change 22 to 23</u>
Personnel	\$ 812,313	\$ 804,803	\$ 800,567	(0.5%)
Operation	65,181	64,344	64,344	0.0%
Capital	1,976	1,400	1,400	0.0%
Total	<u>\$ 879,470</u>	<u>\$ 870,547</u>	<u>\$ 866,311</u>	<u>(0.5%)</u>
Personnel Complement	11	11	11	0

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	Performance Measures			Change 22 to 23
	FY21	FY22	FY23	
Workload Measures				
Full Time Judges	5	5	5	0
Jury Commissioners	6	6	6	0
Citizens Eligible to Serve as Petit Jurors	7,600	7,600	7,400	(200)
Citizens Called to Serve as Petit Jurors	5,035	7,300	7,300	0
Jury Panels	800	800	850	50
Grand Jurors Called to Serve	108	108	108	0
Grand Jurors on Master Panel	88	120	120	0

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

There are five judges elected to the Circuit Court by the General Assembly of Virginia, each for a term of eight years. One Judge is elected Chief Judge every two years. The Chief Judge serves as the administrative judge of the support staff, which consists of one part-time and four full-time clerical positions, one part-time management specialist, and five law clerks. The Judges' salaries are paid directly by the Commonwealth. Fines and costs against those found guilty in certain felony and misdemeanor cases from Henrico charges are assessed by the judges. These fines and costs are collected by the Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

The Circuit Court's budget for FY23 is \$866,311. This represents a decrease of \$4,236 or 0.5% from the FY22 budget. This decrease was the effect of the retirement of a senior staff member. The budget includes rising employee healthcare and benefit costs along with a merit-based salary increase. The total operating and capital budgets remain flat from the previous fiscal year.

DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

Service levels of this court can be measured by the number of cases adjudicated in the Circuit Court each year. This includes criminal, civil, domestic, and appeals from the General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts, along with those carried over from the past year, and requests for juries. According to 2021 Caseload Statistical Information, the caseload for the Fourteenth Circuit showed 12,458 cases (civil and criminal) commenced in 2021, with an average of 2,491 per judge. There were 4,568 total criminal cases commenced, with an average of 913 per judge. There were 7,890 civil cases (which includes the misc. and other category) commenced, with an average of 1,578 per judge. The total number of cases (civil and criminal) concluded was 12,016 in 2021, with an average of 2,403 per judge. While these numbers are lower than last budget year, it is anticipated that as things get back to "normal" these numbers will increase again. In addition, with the change in the law that the jury no longer sentences defendants, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in jury trial requests.

Furthermore, the Circuit Court responds to telephone inquiries from citizens and other courts, coordinates with the Sheriff on courthouse security, provides internships (unpaid) to law students, and contributes to educational

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programs to improve the administration of justice. Individual judges also actively participate in organizations, committees, and programs outside of their everyday duties in the courtroom, including but not limited to the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission, the Benchbook Committee, the Drug Court Program, Virginia Continuing Legal Education and Bench Bar Conference. The judges make themselves available for Three Judge Panels at the request of the Chief Justice and any other committee or panel the Chief Justice may request of them. In addition to these activities, judges also participate in mock trials conducted by the University of Richmond School of Law, local high school students, and for police officer training.