

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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2008 Annual Report Maine Judicial Branch

Mission:

To administer justice by providing a safe, accessible, efficient and impartial system of dispute resolution that serves the public interest, protects individual rights, and instills respect for the law.

Message from Chief Justice Saufley and State Court Administrator Glessner



© Martha Mickles

LEIGH I. SAUFLEY
Chief Justice,
Supreme Judicial Court



TED GLESSNER
State Court
Administrator

The State of Maine faced many challenges in 2008. During the fiscal crisis, many great ideas for increased efficiency and conservation of taxpayer dollars were created or implemented within the Judicial Branch. For example,

- The Business and Consumer Docket completed its first year, with very positive results;
- The use of video conferencing was expanded throughout the state to save time and travel costs;
- Library costs were substantially reduced through electronic research capacity and local publishing;
- Plans for an increase in security personnel continued but were not fully realized because of lack of funding;
- The Family Drug Treatment Courts, with an emphasis on reunifying families, succeeded in child protection cases. The program is credited with supporting 6 mothers who gave birth to drug free babies in 2008.
- Twenty-two of forty-one clerks' offices have been consolidated into eleven streamlined offices;
- Renovation of the courthouse in Houlton provided the foundation for a consolidation of the courts into one building in mid-2009;
- Building of the new consolidated courthouse in Bangor progressed well. This environmentally responsible new courthouse will meet Maine Energy Conservation Building Standards and will open on time and on budget before the end of 2009.

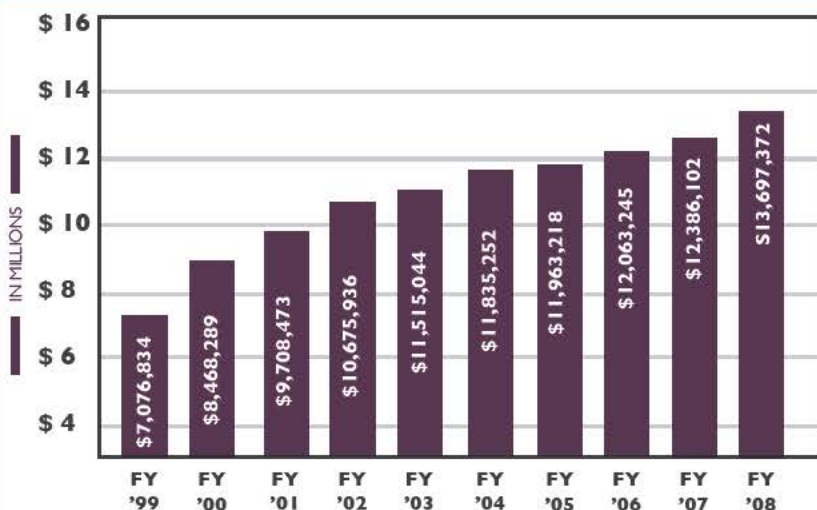


THOMAS E. HUMPHREY, Chief Justice, Superior Court
ANN M. MURRAY, Chief Judge, District Court
CHARLES C. LAVERDIERE, Deputy Chief Judge, District Court

2008 brought with it increased financial challenges, but with patience from the public and the dedication of the men and women of the Judicial Branch, we will weather the storm.

An expanded version of this annual report can be found on the Judicial Branch web site at:
http://www.courts.state.me.us/maine_courts/annual_reports/index.shtml

Total Expenditures For Constitutionally Required Counsel



Over the past decade, costs for providing legal services to indigent citizens in criminal, child protective and mental health cases have nearly doubled. The funds, which include costs for attorneys and related expenses, account for about 22% of the entire Judicial Branch budget.

MAINE STATE COURTS : AT A GLANCE



POPULATION SERVED 1,316,727
GEOGRAPHIC AREA 35,387 sq. mi.
COURTHOUSES 40



BUDGET \$62,586,631
% of State General Fund 2.0%



JUDGES (Total) 60
Supreme Judicial Court Justices 7
Superior Court Justices 17
District Court Judges 36
FAMILY LAW MAGISTRATES 8
STAFF (clerks, security & support) 440



TOTAL 2008 CASES FILED 290,393
Supreme Judicial Court 755
Superior Court 19,272
District Court 131,038
Violations Bureau 139,328

THE COURTS OF MAINE

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The Supreme Judicial Court is the governing body of the Judicial Branch. Sitting as the Law Court, it is the court of final appeal.

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT NEW CASE FILINGS in 2008

Criminal.....	214
Civil.....	292
Worker's Comp.....	98
Family/Divorce.....	102
Child Protective.....	49
TOTAL.....	755

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The justices of the Superior Court serve the entire State, hearing both civil and criminal cases, including jury trials.

SUPERIOR COURT NEW CASE FILINGS in 2008

Criminal.....	14,813
Civil.....	4,459
TOTAL.....	19,272

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The District Court hears both civil and criminal cases, in addition to exercising exclusive jurisdiction over family, juvenile, child protective, small claims, and traffic violation cases.

DISTRICT COURT NEW CASE FILINGS in 2008

Criminal.....	56,411
Civil.....	19,743
Family/Divorce.....	9,036
Small Claims.....	8,842
Juvenile.....	3,976
Forcible Entry.....	4,943
Protection from Abuse.....	6,119
Protection from Harrassment.....	4,582
Child Protective.....	836
Mental Health.....	975
Civil Violations.....	15,575
Traffic Infractions.....	139,328
TOTAL.....	270,366

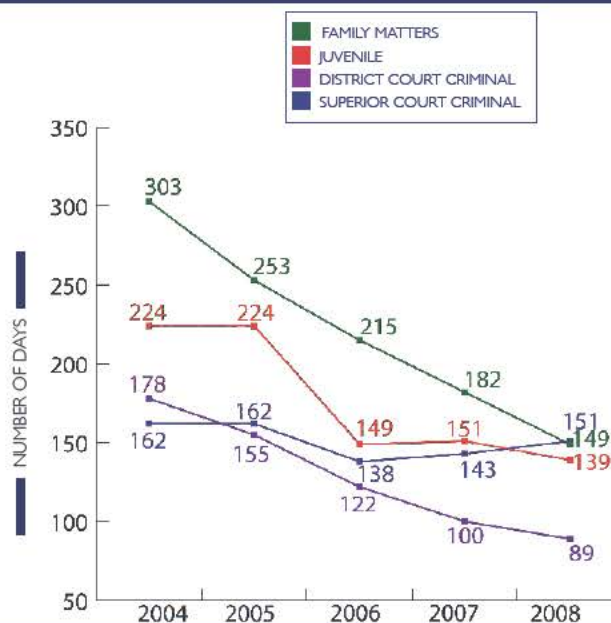
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The Family Division has oversight of family matters in the District Court. There are 8 Family Law Magistrates who work in the Family Division.

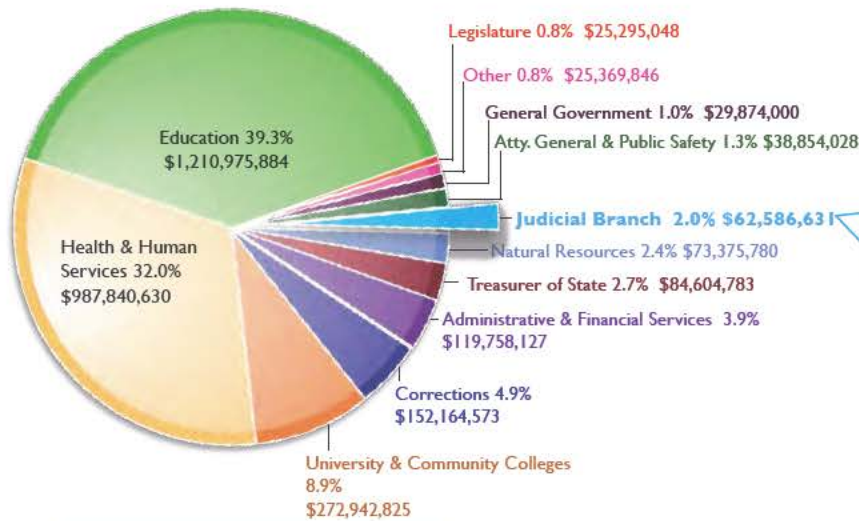
TIME TO RESOLUTION OF CASES REDUCED SIGNIFICANTLY

Coordinated regional scheduling, implemented in the trial courts in 2004, has greatly reduced the time it takes to dispose of the most urgent cases – those dealing with violence, children, and families. For example, as illustrated by this graph, the average age of pending family cases has decreased significantly, from 303 days in 2004 to 149 days in 2008. Data provided in this graph reports the average number of days from filing date, for all cases that are open on June 30 each year.

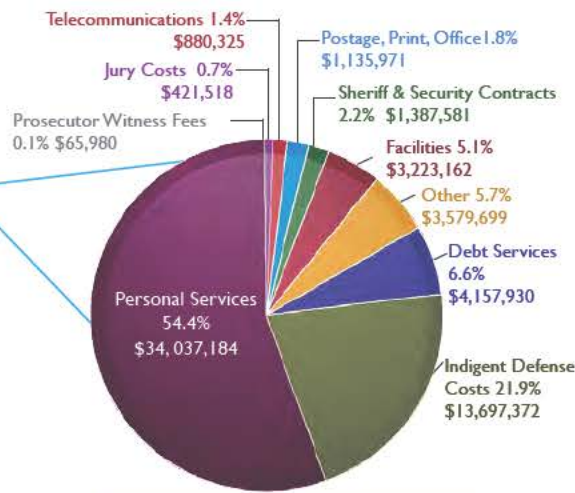


FISCAL INFORMATION

GENERAL FUND AND JUDICIAL BRANCH EXPENDITURES



STATEWIDE GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES, FY'08
Total: \$3,083,642,155

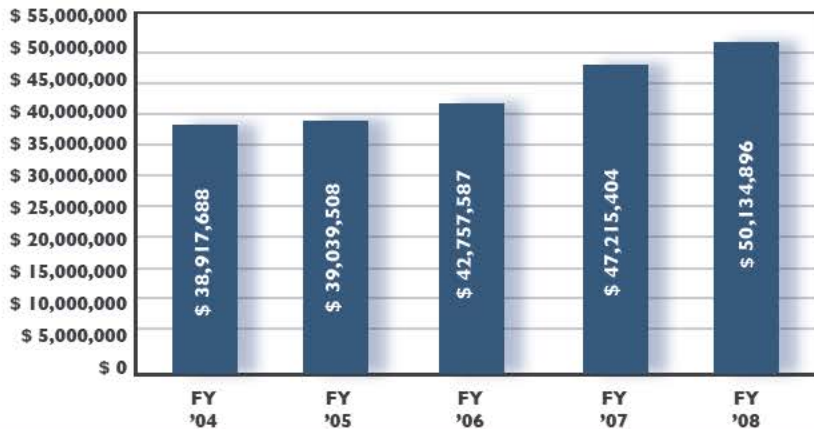


JUDICIAL BRANCH GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES FY'08
Total: \$62,586,631

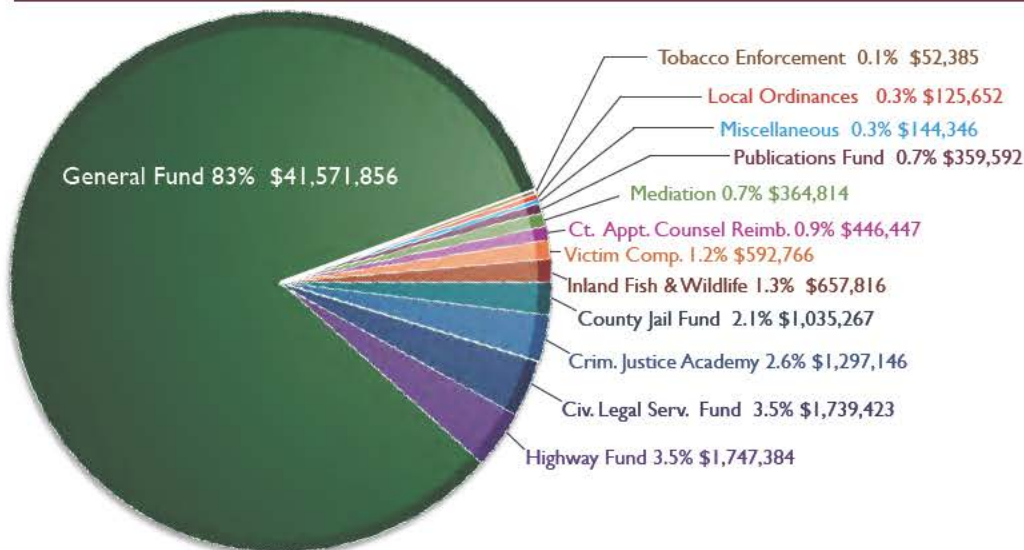
REVENUE COLLECTED BY THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

FY'08 revenue collection exceeded \$50 million and was 29% higher than 5 years ago and more than 6% greater than in FY '07.

Throughout FY'08, the Judicial Branch conducted an assertive COLLECTION PROGRAM to collect unpaid fines.



REVENUE DISTRIBUTED BY THE JUDICIAL BRANCH



Revenue collected by the Judicial Branch is deposited into the State's General Fund and to other dedicated accounts. Sources of revenue include fees, fines, and surcharges.

FY'08 Revenue Distribution
Total: \$50,134,846

COURT REGIONS AND CASES FILED

REGION 5

CASE TOTAL 20,342
 REGIONAL POPULATION..... 165,612
 COURTHOUSES..... 7

PENOBSCOT

Bangor Superior..... 1,628
 Bangor District..... 11,743
 Newport District..... 2,523
 Lincoln District..... 1,410
 Millinocket District..... 1,132

PISCATAQUIS

Dover-Foxcroft Superior..... 132
 Dover-Foxcroft District..... 1,774

REGION 4

CASE TOTAL 20,561
 REGIONAL POPULATION..... 172,336
 COURTHOUSES..... 5

SOMERSET

Skowhegan Superior..... 701
 Skowhegan District..... 5,233

KENNEBEC

Augusta Superior..... 1,672
 Augusta District..... 7,338
 Waterville District..... 5,617

REGION 3

CASE TOTAL 22,925
 REGIONAL POPULATION..... 193,746
 COURTHOUSES..... 7

FRANKLIN

Farmington Superior..... 491
 Farmington District..... 2,969

OXFORD

South Paris Superior..... 771
 South Paris District..... 2,600
 Rumford District..... 2,203

ANDROSCOGGIN

Auburn Superior..... 1,669
 Lewiston District..... 12,222

REGION 2

CASE TOTAL 28,162
 REGIONAL POPULATION..... 276,047
 COURTHOUSES..... 2

CUMBERLAND

Portland Superior..... 4,322
 Portland District..... 20,211
 Bridgton District..... 3,629

REGION 1

CASE TOTAL 24,736
 REGIONAL POPULATION..... 201,686
 COURTHOUSES..... 4

YORK

Alfred Superior..... 3,878
 Biddeford District..... 9,702
 Springvale District..... 5,827
 York District..... 5,329

REGION 8

CASE TOTAL 8,621
 REGIONAL POPULATION..... 71,676
 COURTHOUSES..... 6

AROOSTOOK

Caribou/Houlton Superior..... 1,131
 Caribou District..... 1,480
 Houlton District..... 1,954
 Presque Isle District..... 2,559
 Fort Kent/Madawaska District... 1,497

REGION 7

CASE TOTAL 8,681
 REGIONAL POPULATION..... 85,636
 COURTHOUSES..... 3

HANCOCK

Ellsworth Superior..... 507
 Ellsworth District..... 4,719

WASHINGTON

Machias Superior..... 363
 Machias District..... 1,723
 Calais District..... 1,369

REGION 6

CASE TOTAL 16,282
 REGIONAL POPULATION..... 149,988
 COURTHOUSES..... 6

WALDO

Belfast Superior..... 448
 Belfast District..... 2,880

KNOX

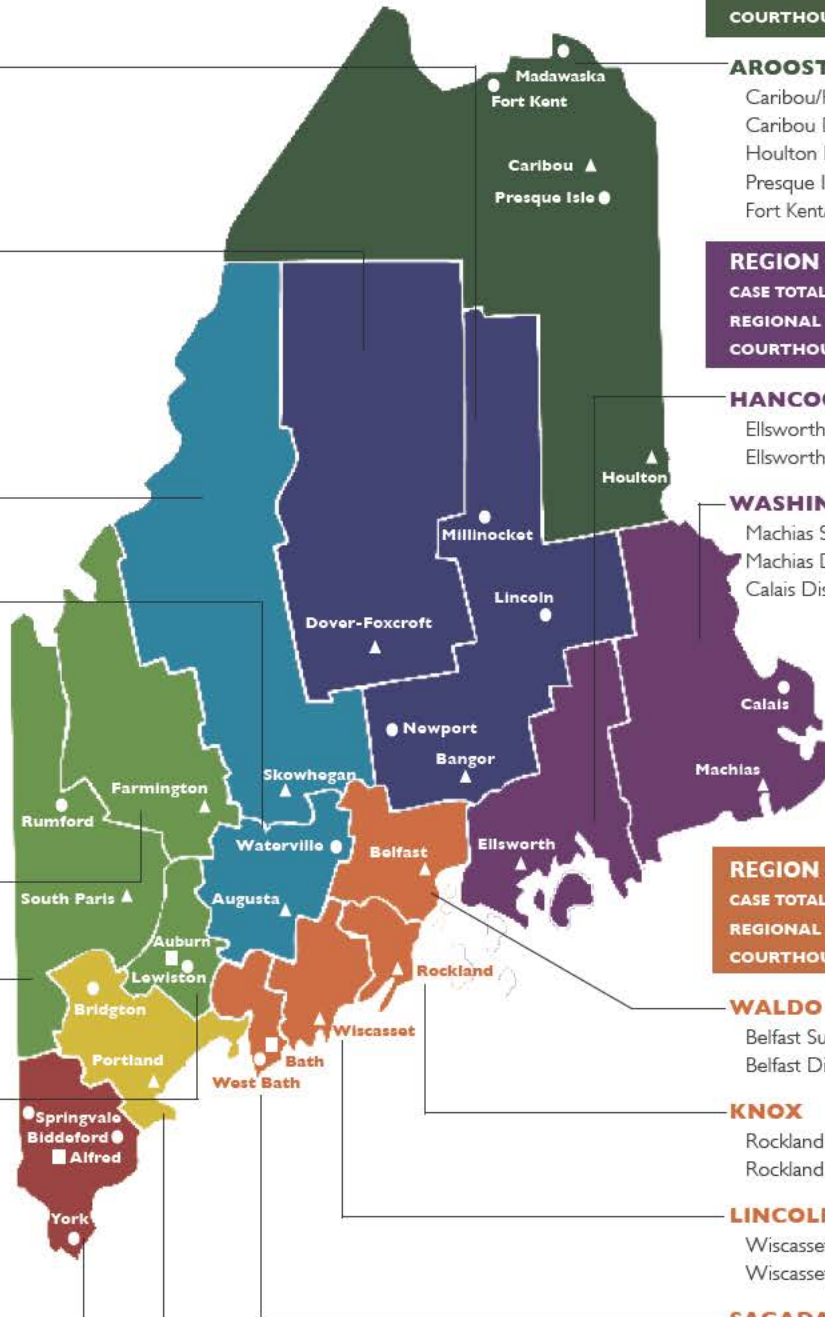
Rockland Superior..... 619
 Rockland District..... 3,383

LINCOLN

Wiscasset Superior..... 483
 Wiscasset District..... 2,595

SAGadahoc

Bath Superior..... 457
 West Bath District..... 5,417



KEY

- District Court
- Superior Court
- ▲ District and Superior in the same city/town.

Counties grouped together by color are part of a single court REGION, where resources and scheduling are coordinated.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit the Court's web page at www.courts.state.me.us where you'll find:

- PUBLICATIONS: *A Guide to Small Claims* • *A Guide to Protection from Abuse and Harassment* • *Citizens Guide to the Courts* • *Child Protective Handbooks*
- INFORMATION about court proceedings and offices
- LINKS to legal resources, volunteer opportunities, court rules, forms and opinions

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
 PO Box 4820
 Portland, ME 04112-4820
 (207) 822-0792
 (207) 822-0701 (TTY)

TRAFFIC INFRACTIONS:
 Total: 139,328



* Population Statistics source: US Census Bureau