

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# MAINE JUDICIAL BRANCH



# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

**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.

## MAINE STATE COURTS: AT A GLANCE



POPULATION OF MAINE.....	1,377,238
GEOGRAPHIC AREA.....	30,843 sq. mi.
COURT LOCATIONS.....	34



<b>Judicial Branch Operations.....</b>	<b>\$69,362,092</b>
Personal Services.....	\$51,684,001
All Other Operational Expenses.....	\$17,678,091
Debt Service.....	\$14,858,238
Guardians ad Litem and Psychological Exams..	\$5,251,797
Capital.....	\$327,484
<b>FY22 EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>TOTAL: \$89,799,611</b>
<b>% of State General Fund:</b> .....	<b>2.26%</b>

<b>FY22 REVENUE</b>	<b>TOTAL: \$25,228,389</b>
Deposited to Maine's General Fund.....	\$14,559,884
Deposited to Dedicated Revenue Accounts..	\$10,668,505



<b>JUDICIAL OFFICERS &amp; STAFF</b>	<b>TOTAL: 558</b>
<b>JUDGES (Total)</b> .....	<b>63</b>
District Court Judges.....	39
Superior Court Justices.....	17
Supreme Judicial Court Justices.....	7
<b>* FAMILY LAW MAGISTRATES</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>STAFF</b> .....	<b>487</b>
Administration.....	6
Clerks.....	248
Court Process, Services.....	18
Court Reporters/Tech Asst.....	12
Finance, HR, Facilities.....	19
Information Technology.....	23
Judicial Admins.....	12
Law Clerks.....	27
Security.....	103
Service Center.....	19

*\*Magistrates: one-third General Fund, two-thirds federally funded.*



<b>FY22 CASES FILED</b>	<b>TOTAL: 129,106</b>
Violations Bureau.....	50,518
Unified Criminal Docket.....	40,535
District Court.....	35,133
Superior Court.....	2,440
Supreme Judicial Court.....	480

## 2022 in Review: Advancing Our Mission through a Deeper Understanding of Court Processes, Data, and Resource Needs

The COVID-19 pandemic tested Maine courts in unprecedented ways and, in doing so, revealed chronic resource deficiencies. At the height of the pandemic in 2020, and during a resurgence in 2021, we took on the challenge to innovate while keeping courthouses open to the public. In 2022 we expanded and improved initiatives introduced during the pandemic, such as the use of remote proceedings for many types of cases and court events. However, we also realized that to make further progress, it was crucial to gain a deeper understanding of case data and resource needs.

### “Working the Problem” – A deeper look at the case backlog

During the pandemic, the overall number of cases in Maine courts rose at a faster rate than they could be resolved, creating what we frequently refer to as the “case backlog.” In 2022, the Judicial Branch took a deep look at the data on pending cases and found case clearance rates had been declining even before the pandemic. Cases are now more complex to try and take more resources to resolve. For example, despite a modest decrease in overall criminal filings, felonies are an increasing portion of the cases filed. Failures to appear and continuance rates have increased, especially in felonies. Other factors in complexity and delay include high rates of mental health and substance use disorders. The opioid epidemic and substance use disorders drive not only drug crimes but also crimes involving property and violence. In more recent years, the number of Child Protective cases filed has nearly doubled. The lack of constitutionally required counsel has contributed to an already overburdened justice system.

In the fall of 2022, the Judicial Branch partnered with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to conduct a study on how Maine judges and clerks spend their time. Detailed records were kept to get quantifiable evidence to support what we have long known – Maine’s courts are severely understaffed. Preliminary findings from the NCSC suggest we need far more resources to fulfill our mission.

To address this shortage of resources, the Judicial Branch has asked the Legislature for more personnel, including clerks, judges, and marshals, to allow our trial courts to run at greater capacity. We continue to pursue other innovations to support and strengthen Judicial Branch operations.

### Use of Remote Technologies to Help Move & Resolve Cases

Remote hearings and pre-trial conferences by Zoom and/or telephone for some case types became a permanent feature in our

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# THE COURTS OF MAINE

## SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT



From Left to Right: Justice Catherine R. Connors, Justice Thomas E. Humphrey, Justice Andrew M. Mead, Chief Justice Valerie Stanfill, Justice Joseph M. Jabar, Justice Andrew M. Horton, and Justice Rick E. Lawrence

## TRIAL CHIEFS



From Left to Right: Chief Justice of the Superior Court Robert Mullen; Chief Justice of Maine's Supreme Judicial Court Valerie Stanfill; Deputy Chief Judge of the District Court Lea-Anne Sutton; Chief Judge of the District Court Brent Davis

## STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR



Amy A. Quinlan, Esq.

## TOTAL FY22 COURT CASE FILINGS: 129,106

### CRIMINAL FILINGS: 37,728

Unified Criminal Docket (UCD).....	35,385
Probation Revocations (UCD).....	2,263
Superior Court Probation Revocations.....	80

### DISTRICT COURT FAMILY DIVISION: 17,999

Protection from Abuse .....	5,452
Divorce .....	4,312
Family Matters Post-Judgment .....	3,775
Parental Rights & Responsibilities .....	1,508
Child Protection.....	1,097
Juvenile .....	961
Adoptions .....	421
Guardianships .....	124
Other Family Matters .....	107
Foreign Judgments .....	103
Emancipations.....	93
Grandparents' Rights .....	35
Name Changes .....	11

### CIVIL FILINGS: 15,873

	<u>SUPERIOR</u>	<u>DISTRICT</u>
FEDs (Evictions)		4,090
Small Claims		2,405
Other Civil	1,033	3,017
Tort	756	89
Contract	256	2,603
Foreclosure	315	531
Money Judgments		778
<b>TOTAL(S):</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>13,513</b>

### OTHER COURT ACTIONS: 6,508

Civil Violations (District Court & UCD) .....	2,887
Protection from Harassment (District Court).....	2,581
Mental Health (District Court) .....	1,040

### SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT

Supreme Judicial Court .....	480
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### VIOLATIONS BUREAU

Traffic Infractions .....	50,518
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## Year in Review — Continued

court system in 2022. Our Violations Bureau is now on a 100% Zoom platform, with presiding judges at the Violations Bureau in Lewiston. Litigants wishing to challenge a civil traffic violation can do so remotely without having to travel to court.

### Maine eCourts

In 2022, we reorganized our efforts to expand our electronic filing case management system, which, when fully implemented, will provide easier access to the courts and case filings without having to come to a courthouse. We intend bring the family and civil case type package now in use in Bangor to Lewiston/Auburn later in 2023.

### DEI, Accessibility, and Improved Process

In 2022, we started an internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) working group to increase diversity and inclusion and decrease implicit bias in the Judicial Branch. One of the accomplishments of this working group was to facilitate the hiring of a court intern from the Lewiston Somali community. There is now a standing court committee in the works to address DEI issues.

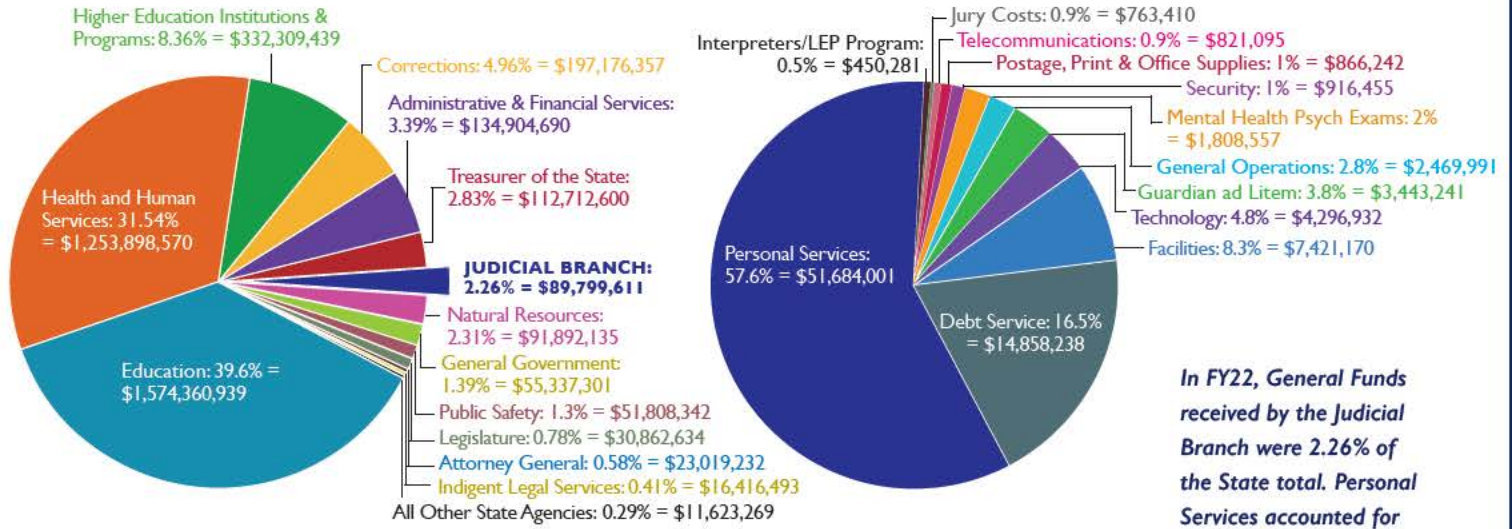
### Additional initiatives in 2022 include:

- Increased training for judges in the use of treatment courts and veterans' courts;
- Enhanced use of mental health dockets to better address the significant mental health challenges to the administration of justice;
- Expanded use of the ShareFile platform to allow for email transmission of filings in criminal cases;
- Improved language access, physical access, and accommodations for those with hearing loss or other disabilities; and
- Development of resources, practices, and policies to better support self-represented litigants and court users and facilitate their engagement in their court proceedings. New materials include videos about the court process and handouts that explain how to start certain common case types.
- Work continued on the new York Judicial Center in Biddeford, which will bring the District Courts in Springvale, York, and Biddeford, as well as the Superior Court in Alfred, together in one modern, fully accessible, and energy efficient facility.

The Judicial Branch remained committed to providing access to justice to Maine people throughout 2022, as we will in the years to come.

# FISCAL INFORMATION

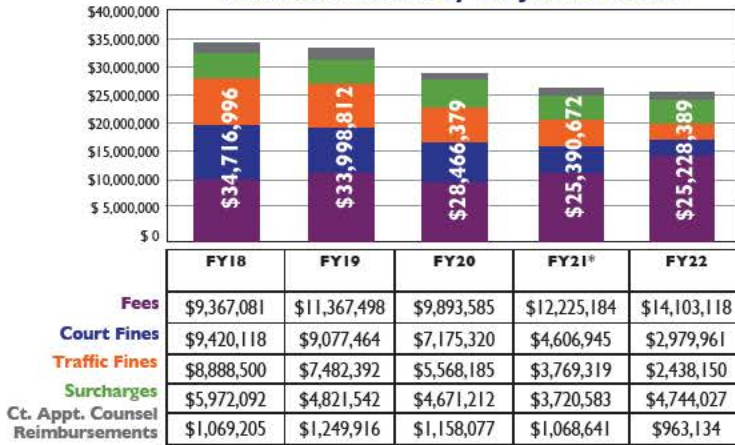
## GENERAL FUND AND JUDICIAL BRANCH EXPENDITURES



In FY22, General Funds received by the Judicial Branch were 2.26% of the State total. Personal Services accounted for more than half (57.6%) of all Judicial Branch expenditures.

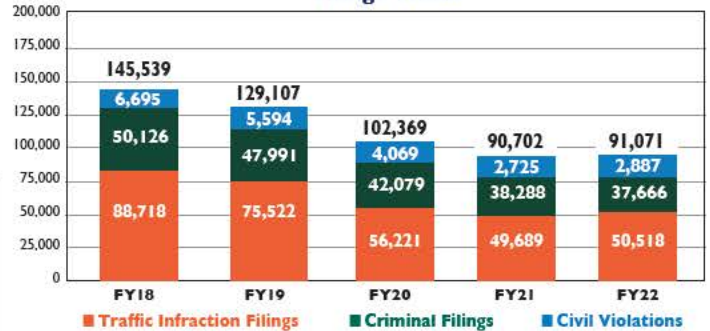
## FY22 REVENUE

Revenue Collected by the Judicial Branch



\*Breakdown of FY21 data corrected for FY22 report.

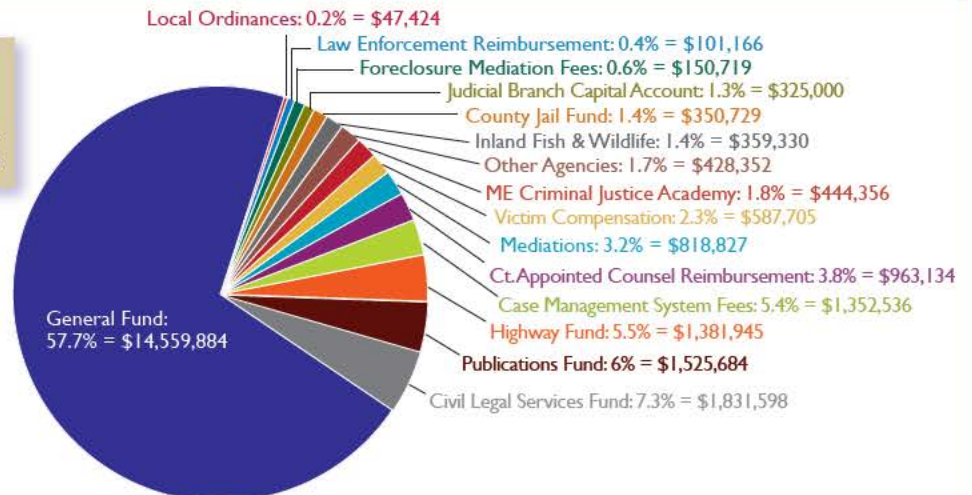
Filings Trend



## REVENUE DISTRIBUTED BY THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

**FY22 Revenue Distribution**  
Total: \$25,228,389  
Deposited to Maine's General Fund.....\$14,559,884  
Deposited to Dedicated Revenue Accounts...\$10,668,505

Revenue collected by the Judicial Branch is deposited into the State's General Fund and to other State-dedicated accounts as required by Maine Statutes.



# COURT REGIONS AND CASES FILED

**REGION 5**  
**CASE TOTAL** ..... 11,761  
**REGIONAL POPULATION**.....169,930  
**COURT LOCATIONS**..... 5

**PENOBSCOT** 3,397 sq. miles/pop. 152,765  
 Bangor Superior..... 211  
 Penobscot UCD.....5,971  
 Bangor District.....3,109  
 Newport District..... 763  
 Lincoln/Millinocket District..547

**PISCATAQUIS** 3,961 sq. miles/pop. 17,165  
 Dover-Foxcroft Superior..... 18  
 Piscataquis UCD..... 690  
 Dover-Foxcroft District..... 452

**REGION 4**  
**CASE TOTAL** ..... 11,428  
**REGIONAL POPULATION**.....175,078  
**COURT LOCATIONS**..... 4

**SOMERSET** 3,924 sq. miles/pop. 50,592  
 Skowhegan Superior ..... 79  
 Somerset UCD ..... 1,623  
 Skowhegan District..... 1,638

**KENNEBEC** 868 sq. miles/pop. 124,486  
 Augusta Superior..... 316  
 Kennebec UCD .....3,473  
 Augusta District.....2,453  
 Waterville District ..... 1,846

**REGION 3**  
**CASE TOTAL** ..... 12,045  
**REGIONAL POPULATION**.....199,350  
**COURT LOCATIONS**..... 6

**FRANKLIN** 1,697 sq. miles/pop. 29,687  
 Farmington Superior..... 32  
 Franklin UCD ..... 860  
 Farmington District.....769

**OXFORD** 2,077 sq. miles/pop. 58,629  
 South Paris Superior..... 102  
 Oxford UCD ..... 1,564  
 South Paris District..... 754  
 Rumford District ..... 571

**ANDROSCOGGIN** 468 sq. miles/pop. 111,034  
 Auburn Superior.....201  
 Androscoggin UCD .....3,414  
 Lewiston District.....3,778

**REGION 2**  
**CASE TOTAL** ..... 13,190  
**REGIONAL POPULATION**.....305,231  
**COURT LOCATIONS**..... 2

**CUMBERLAND** 835 sq. miles/pop. 305,231  
 Portland Superior..... 611  
 Cumberland UCD.....7,191  
 Portland District.....4,427  
 Bridgton District..... 961

**REGION 1**  
**CASE TOTAL** ..... 11,845  
**REGIONAL POPULATION**.....214,591  
**COURT LOCATIONS**..... 4

**YORK** 991 sq. miles/pop. 214,591  
 Alfred Superior ..... 391  
 York UCD .....6,533  
 Biddeford District.....2,233  
 Springvale District..... 1,966  
 York District..... 722

**REGION 8**  
**CASE TOTAL** .....4,941  
**REGIONAL POPULATION**.....66,859  
**COURT LOCATIONS**..... 5

**AROOSTOOK** 6,671 sq. miles/pop. 66,859  
 Caribou/Houlton Superior..... 168  
 Aroostook UCD .....2,876  
 Caribou District .....366  
 Presque Isle District ..... 684  
 Houlton District.....520  
 Fort Kent/Madawaska District.... 327

**REGION 7**  
**CASE TOTAL** .....4,411  
**REGIONAL POPULATION**.....87,313  
**COURT LOCATIONS**..... 3

**HANCOCK** 1,587 sq. miles/pop. 56,192  
 Ellsworth Superior ..... 75  
 Hancock UCD .....1,430  
 Ellsworth District.....1,097

**WASHINGTON** 2,563 sq. miles/pop. 31,121  
 Machias Superior .....29  
 Washington UCD .....1,041  
 Machias District.....422  
 Calais District..... 317

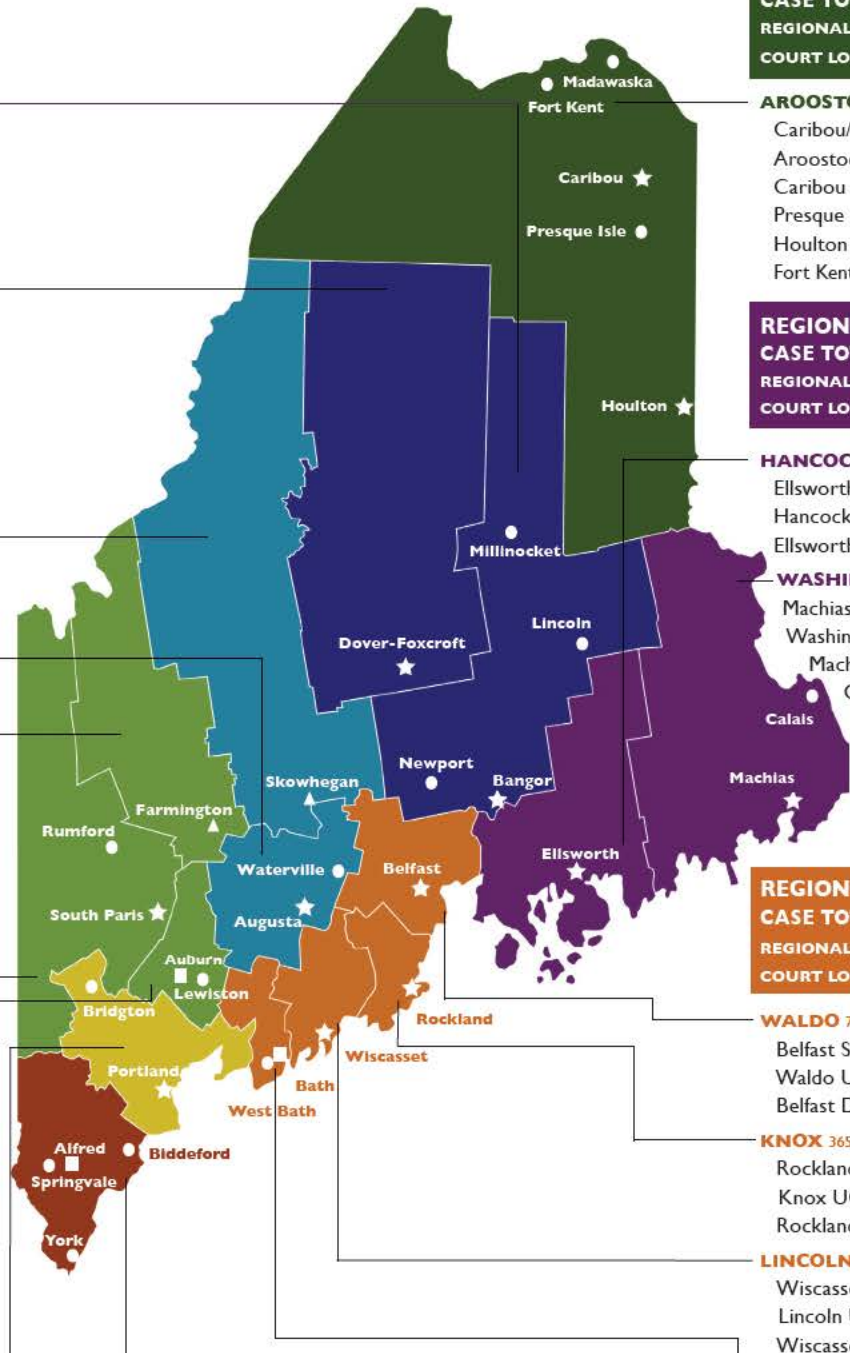
**REGION 6**  
**CASE TOTAL** .....8,487  
**REGIONAL POPULATION**.....153,895  
**COURT LOCATIONS**..... 5

**WALDO** 730 sq. miles/pop. 39,912  
 Belfast Superior ..... 45  
 Waldo UCD .....1,004  
 Belfast District.....1,044

**KNOX** 365 sq. miles/pop. 41,084  
 Rockland Superior ..... 57  
 Knox UCD.....1,070  
 Rockland District.....1,116

**LINCOLN** 456 sq. miles/pop. 35,828  
 Wiscasset Superior ..... 51  
 Lincoln UCD .....829  
 Wiscasset District.....745

**SAGadahOC** 254 sq. miles/pop. 37,071  
 Bath Superior..... 54  
 Sagadahoc UCD.....966  
 West Bath District ..... 1,506



**KEY**

- District Court
- Superior Court
- ▲ District and Superior in the same city/town
- ★ District and Superior Court occupy the same building

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

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

For more information about the Courts  
**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS**  
 PO Box 4820  
 Portland, ME 04112-4820  
 (207) 822-0792 711 (Maine Relay)

Visit the website: [courts.maine.gov](http://courts.maine.gov)  
 or scan the QR code

**TRAFFIC INFRACTIONS**  
 Total: 50,518

\* Square mileage and population data source: US Census Bureau 2021 Estimates