



RHODE ISLAND JUDICIARY  
 250 Benefit Street  
 Providence, Rhode Island 02903  
 (401) 222-3266  
[www.courts.ri.gov](http://www.courts.ri.gov)



## 2013 RHODE ISLAND JUDICIARY ANNUAL REPORT



---

# INTRODUCTION

---

To the Honorable Members of the  
General Assembly:

It is our privilege to present to you the 2013 Annual Report of the Rhode Island Judiciary, pursuant to G.L. 1956 (1997 Reenactment) § 8-15-7. The report's purpose is to inform you and the public of court programs as well as provide statistics on caseloads, budget, and revenue collections.

Though we are separate in our respective branches of government, all of us are tied together by the shared thread of public service and united by a common mission – the administration of equal justice.

The year 2013 brought the advent of what promises to be a comprehensive and efficient case management system, the crucial first step to bring the Judiciary into the age of electronic case filing. We formalized our plan to provide language access services to all litigants throughout the court system. And we had the pleasure to arrange a visit from retired United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor to a Providence school as part of our community outreach and education program.

And yet, there are so many waiting at our doors, seeking refuge in the shelter of justice. We hear lots of talk about caseloads, but we should also understand that our work and our decisions have an impact on real people's lives.

To that end, in this year's Annual Report, there is less emphasis on numbers and more focus on the things we do best – from the daily dockets to the high-profile cases to our specialized calendars. On the pages

that follow, you will read about what we do to serve the public and solve its problems – all at an economical cost.

We appreciate the hard work and dedication of our Judiciary employees, and we are grateful for the assistance of court administrative staff in the preparation of this report.

Respectfully submitted,



Paul A. Suttell  
Chief Justice



J. Joseph Baxter, Jr.  
State Court Administrator



# RHODE ISLAND JUDICIARY ANNUAL REPORT



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. PROBLEM SOLVING COURTS.....1
- II. SERVING THE PUBLIC.....9
- III. NAVIGATING THE COURT SYSTEM.....15
- IV. COURT GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION.....16
- V. RECOGNITION.....20
- VI. CASELOAD DATA CHARTS.....22

---

# PROBLEM SOLVING COURTS

---

## **Our Courts as Problem Solvers: A Team Approach**

Pension reform. 38 Studios. Receiverships for Landmark Hospital and The Westerly Hospital, as well as the Central Coventry Fire District. These civil matters and a handful of high-profile crimes are just a few of the important cases that made headlines as the Rhode Island Judiciary grappled with the complex legal issues of 2013.

But what of the many cases that do not gain that level of renown? From Woonsocket to Westerly, from Warren to West Greenwich, each day thousands of families, businesses, and individuals turn to our courts to resolve civil disputes, respond to criminal complaints, and settle important financial matters.

Our high-volume courts regularly help the most vulnerable in our communities, such as battered women seeking protection orders, abused and neglected children, and victims of vandalism and theft. When society peels back the layers of behavioral issues to examine the motivation of people who commit crimes, often there are indicators of mental illness or substance abuse. In these cases, it takes a special approach by the courts to be effective. Our courts are problem solvers, and increasingly Rhode Island has followed a national trend of employing specialized, team-oriented calendars to address not simply the behavior or the crime, but the underlying factors as well. The goal: avoid repeating the behavior.

## **Adult Drug Calendar**

“If you won’t give up on me, then I won’t give up on me.”

So said Bruno, a client of the Superior Court’s Adult Drug Calendar, recounting how Magistrate Patrick T. Burke stood by him when he suffered some frustrations and relapses as he attempted to stop using drugs.

“And that’s why I’m here today. I had to change my way of life,” he told a courtroom full of onlookers at the intervention program’s graduation ceremony in May 2013 at the Licht Judicial Complex.



*Superior Court Magistrate John J. Flynn on the Adult Drug Calendar.*

Relapses are part of the process, said Magistrate John J. Flynn, who succeeded Magistrate Burke on the Adult Drug Calendar and who presided over the ceremony for six clients. “But you made the decision in your busy life to make recovery a priority,” he told Bruno.

“This program saves lives,” a young man named Ryan told the courtroom’s visitors, which included Governor Lincoln D. Chafee, Presiding Justice Alice B. Gibney, and several legislative leaders. Ryan recited his struggles with addiction and his desire to drop out of the program, but Magistrate Burke would not let him. Instead, Ryan persisted and qualified to have the state drop criminal charges against him and move to expunge his record, which Magistrate Flynn did at the ceremony.

Only certain offenders are allowed in the treatment-based program. Participants must be referred and must sign a contract with the court. The program features a team approach to intensive judicial supervision, frequent random drug screens, treatment options, accountability, incentives, and sanctions. Working with service providers and agencies in the local communities, the program seeks to achieve individual rehabilitative success and avoidance of further involvement with the court system. Participation averages 12 to 15, months and in 2013 about 102 individuals were in the program.



Superior Court Presiding Justice Alice Bridget Gibney, left, and Governor Lincoln D. Chafee, right, at an Adult Drug Calendar graduation ceremony in May 2013.

One man, John P., a Vietnam veteran, thanked the Adult Drug Calendar staff for believing in him. A woman named Jacqueline said she was grateful that success in the program and expungement would allow her to proceed with a job application without facing rejection. A young woman named Melissa said she now had “an opportunity to get my life back.”

### Juvenile and Family Drug Treatment Calendar

Similarly, drug treatment programs have evolved in the Family Court to serve juvenile offenders, as well as children in a substance-involved family. The Family Drug Treatment Calendar aims to protect children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected by parental substance abuse, enhance parental capacity to meet their children’s needs, and expedite permanency for children in state care. It develops comprehensive case plans in collaboration with child welfare, helps participants with access to treatment and other services, and measures progress

with intensive follow-up, service provider reports, and frequent court supervision of judicial orders.

A \$550,000, three-year grant started in October 2013 is expected to enhance these much needed services on a daily basis. The program will be expanded from 25 to 45 cases. Expanding participation and care coordination and case management increase the chances of successful reunification of additional families with substance abuse and co-occurring disorders.

A two-year grant will allow the Family Court to partner with Rhode Island Hospital psychologists to pioneer early intervention strategies for young offenders at risk for mental health and substance abuse disorders. As research has demonstrated, youthful offenders have substantially higher rates of psychiatric and substance abuse disorders than their non-offending peers. These factors have shown to increase recidivism along with other poor outcomes. The majority of studies and programs to date have focused on juvenile detainees or re-entry populations while very few intervention programs have targeted youths first entering the juvenile justice system. The Family Court will screen juveniles who enter the court system at the earliest stages and concentrate on early identification, intervention, and treatment. This early screening at a diversionary level is expected to handle approximately 2,400 juveniles over the two-year grant period.

### Domestic Violence Calendar

From her position on the Superior Court bench, Associate Justice Susan E. McGuirl has seen the uncertainty, the anguish, and the tragedy that can be associated with domestic violence cases. Judge McGuirl has overseen the Domestic Violence Calendar since its inception in the fall



Superior Court Associate Justice Susan E. McGuirl on the Domestic Violence Calendar.

of 2011. While she does not preside over every trial in such cases, she manages them until they are ready for trial or disposition. The goals, she said, are to prioritize and streamline domestic violence cases in a more efficient manner; hold all parties accountable, ensure the safety of all involved, and provide victims of domestic violence and sexual assault with access to appropriate resources. Previously, the parties had to face several judges in multiple courtrooms before having their cases ultimately heard and/or resolved.

The calendar grew out of concern expressed by several judges and a number of frustrating delays, says Superior Court Presiding Justice Alice B. Gibney. “The lawyers will know who to go to,” she says. “It avoids a scattershot approach. It will be time and cost effective for all concerned. These kinds of cases cry out for coordination. There is a lot of volatility, a lot of emotion and hostility, because the parties know each other. It is dangerous to let these cases linger. We think this focus of using a specialized calendar will save angst for the alleged victims and defendants alike.”

A part-time case coordinator assists with the collaboration and cooperation of the Public Defender and the Attorney General, which has four prosecutors devoted to domestic violence cases.

## Truancy Calendar



Family Court Magistrate  
Edward H. Newman

The Family Court's Truancy Calendar constitutes a change in the policy of handling truants from a formal court petition to a community and school-based intervention program involving various elements of

the community. A reduction in truancy has been shown to decrease crime, teen pregnancy, and drug and alcohol use as well as to change attitudes to enhance school readiness. The Truancy Calendar assigns Magistrates Angela M. Paulhus, Edward H. Newman, Charles Levesque, Rossie Harris, and Paul Jones, Jr. to nearly 50 schools in 21 districts across Rhode Island to initially hear cases at the local level on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Both parents and truants are summoned before the court which, after a hearing, recommends appropriate intervention measures. The court supervises cases on a continuing basis until truancy is no longer an issue.

## Veterans Treatment Calendar

Formally known as the Rhode Island Alternatives to Sentencing and Trauma Recovery Program, a jail diversion program tuned to the unique circumstances of veterans who commit offenses, continues to thrive under the auspices of the District Court.

The Veterans Treatment Calendar is designed to direct veterans into a court program that integrates support and treatment plans with the judicial process. It is intended to provide treatment options that will result in potential jail diversion, possible reduction of charges, or alternatives in sentencing.

District Court Chief Judge Jeanne E. LaFazia told Lawyers Weekly newspaper in 2013 that while still an Associate Judge on the District Court, she started noticing that more people with military backgrounds were appearing before her. "What I started hearing, particularly on domestic cases, and mostly from the women who were victims, was: 'This wouldn't have happened before he went overseas. He wasn't like that before. This was after his second tour that it started.' I realized that people were going overseas, getting deployed, and they were coming back different than when they went. I felt that we have an obligation to recognize these people, to know when they are in our courtrooms. I realized that if we don't do that, things are going to be happening to them differently than with non-military people."



District Court Chief Judge Jeanne E. LaFazia and  
United States Senator Sheldon Whitehouse at a Veterans  
Treatment Calendar graduation

The Rhode Island Veterans Treatment Calendar is heard one afternoon a week at the Noel Judicial Complex in Warwick. District Court Associate Judge Pamela Woodcock Pfeiffer presides over the calendar. "With the majority of individuals who have participated in the program and attended the required counseling sessions," says Judge Woodcock Pfeiffer, "you can actually see a distinct improvement both physically and emotionally from the person who first entered the arraignment court to the person who walks out of the courtroom door months later."



Superior Court Associate Justice Robert D. Krause on the Gun Calendar.

## Gun Calendar

Already among the states with the toughest gun laws, Rhode Island in 1994 was the first in the country to establish a trial court Gun Calendar to counter a surge in drug and gang-related gun crimes. In the years since, the calendar has heard more than 3,400 cases, with nearly 700 going to trial. More than half the cases have resulted in jail time for the defendant, and the time from arraignment to disposition has shrunk from 18 months to 4. The calendar puts gun cases on a fast track, with the aim of getting as many guns off the streets as possible.

Superior Court Associate Justice Robert D. Krause, who runs the calendar today, told Rhode Island Monthly magazine in 2013 that he could not quantify the deterrent effect of the gun calendar, but he had no doubt of its impact. One notorious gang, in particular, he said, was decimated locally after their cases were put on the fast track on the Gun Calendar.

## Business Calendar

Economic growth and stable business relationships are dependent on a civil justice system that is working at its best. The framework of the Superior Court Business Calendar allows quick resolution of disputes and has been praised by Rhode Island corporations for concentrating on their businesses, cutting litigation costs, and preserving an environment for creating and retaining jobs. It is a separate docket exclusively focused on commercial litigation, resulting in a faster resolution of cases through either alternative dispute resolution or streamlined court procedures. It sends the message that Rhode Island is interested in crafting a climate that is attractive to prospective new businesses as well as those already located in the state.

The Business Calendar cases are heard by Associate Justice Michael A. Silverstein in Providence/Bristol County, who has been on the calendar since its inception in 2001, and Associate Justice Brian P. Stern in

Kent, Newport, and Washington Counties since 2011. Both jurists have a particular interest and expertise in business law issues and litigation.

“Businesspeople don’t like to spend their time in court,” Associate Justice



Superior Court Associate Justice  
Michael A. Silverstein

Silverstein told *Lawyers Weekly* newspaper in a 2013 interview. “It’s better for the economy if businesspeople spend their time in business. And if we can send them out quickly on a resolution by mediation or some

other tactic, it is good for the economy. Mediation doesn’t always work out, but hopefully it’s one of the virtues of having a dedicated business calendar.”

The deal that turned around the financially strapped The Westerly Hospital – a restructuring overseen from 2011 to 2013 by Associate Justice Stern – received national recognition from a leading network of financial professionals. The Merger & Acquisition Advisor, based in New York City, selected the hospital’s acquisition in 2013 by Lawrence & Memorial Hospital of New London, Connecticut, for its annual Turnaround Award as Deal of the Year in the health care sector. The Westerly Hospital filed for receivership in December 2011 after struggling to pay its creditors and employees. Associate Justice Stern appointed an attorney as special master to run the hospital during the receivership and to seek bids for its acquisition. Judge Stern presided over dozens of hearings and conferences in the process.

“This is a tangible demonstration that there is a real alternative to federal

bankruptcy for organizations in financial distress, in particular where the state has a major policy, health, or public protection interest,” Judge Stern says. “The result in this case is exactly what former Superior Court Presiding Justice Joseph F. Rodgers, Jr. spoke about when he created the court’s Business Calendar 13 years ago – to have a specialized and efficient calendar for companies in distress that will preserve jobs and services in Rhode Island. In this case, the Department of Health, the attorney general, the Town of Westerly, the United Nurses and Allied Professionals, and local stakeholders all worked together to make this a success. This is positive news for the legislature as well. After the issues over the years with the Hospital Conversion Act,



Superior Court Associate Justice Brian P. Stern

the new legislative changes in 2012 allowed expedited processing and review by regulators in the Department of Health and the attorney general’s office.”

### Mediation

Along the lines of mediation, the Superior Court holds an annual event for parties locked in civil litigation at a time of year when the holiday spirit might bring opposing sides to a meeting of the minds. Settlement/Mediation Week, held in mid-December every year, brought 223 cases to the table in 2013. Volunteer attorneys served as mediators in tightly scheduled one-hour sessions in Providence/Bristol County Superior Court.

Insurance companies are encouraged to send representatives with the authority to write a check on the spot if the parties settle their dispute.

The prospect of a financial settlement right before Christmas often has an effect on both sides, say Superior Court organizers. During Settlement/Mediation Week 2013, 110 of the 223 cases submitted were settled, but the negotiations often continue for some of the unsettled cases, and a settlement rate of 60 percent was expected.

The Supreme Court’s Appellate Mediation Program, in effect since 2003, saw an increase of 11 percent in 2013 to 222 cases. The program’s resolution rate remained relatively steady at 42 percent and achieved a high satisfaction rating from participants. Appellate mediation is an alternative that gives litigants a chance to resolve their disputes among themselves without the expense, time, and contention of prolonged litigation that might otherwise conclude with oral argument before the full court.

### A Solution to a Decriminalized Offense

While technically not a problem-solving court, the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal became the creative solution as the venue for hearing first offenses under the state’s new decriminalization of first possession of small amounts of marijuana, starting in 2013. These offenses of possession of one ounce or less of marijuana are now deemed civil violations rather than crimes, and because the Traffic Tribunal deals almost exclusively with civil violations – albeit motor vehicle related – it was identified as the best court to handle these matters. The Traffic Tribunal worked extensively with prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, community groups, and members of the Rhode Island Bar to prepare for the law’s implementation in April. Through the remainder of 2013, the Traffic Tribunal handled 1,589 violations by adults and 229 violations for juveniles. The law provides for civil fines and, in the case of a juvenile, a drug awareness program and community service.

---

# SERVING THE PUBLIC

---

At the turn of this century, our court infrastructure was in trouble. We were faced with decrepit and overcrowded buildings, an antiquated computer system, court records still being kept by hand, a significant lack of security, and a disenchanted public struggling to access court services, to name just a few. Many of our courthouses were unfit and unable to handle the daily demands placed upon them. They had simply outlived their ability to adequately serve the needs of our Rhode Island citizens who must have access to them. Our courtrooms and courthouses were viewed as private, closed, inaccessible venues instead of havens of safety and justice.

Since then, with new courthouses in Warwick and Cranston, many of our structural deficiencies have been alleviated. Today, we continue to modernize our technology, update our security systems, and continually assess our services to the public that we serve.

## Technology

In 2013, the Rhode Island Judiciary began a 39-month transition to a new case management system and electronic case filing (e-filing). Each of our six courts will convert to the new system. Altogether it is a huge undertaking for the courts, one that will involve extensive training for staff, attorneys, and the public. The expected benefits are proportionate to the effort to implement it. The system is expected



*Chief Justice Suttell visited Workers' Compensation Court during the case management transition.*

to keep our courts up with the wave of technology that can make our record-keeping more efficient, more accessible, and more responsive to the needs of our citizens.

The case management system is known as Odyssey while the e-filing system is called File & Serve. Both systems are products from the Courts and Justice Division of Tyler Technologies of Plano, Texas. Preparations and training began in the Workers' Compensation Court in 2013, with a planned rollout in the spring of 2014. By November 2014, the case management system and e-filing system are projected to start for civil matters in the Superior, Family, and District Courts. The Traffic Tribunal is expected to be online by May 2015. This will be followed by the Superior, Family, and District



The training room at the Judicial Technology Center on Weybosset Street in Providence has been turned into a mock courtroom and learning center for the three-year transition to electronic filing for all courts.

Courts criminal cases and Supreme Court cases in May 2016.

File & Serve, the e-filing component, is designed to streamline customer interaction. It will provide attorneys with the ability and convenience to file cases from anywhere they have Internet access, any day and any time. The public portal will also provide users with greater access to court files.

Odyssey will replace the antiquated existing case management system. It will include features such as judge assignment, mass docketing, case file tracking, time standards, scheduling, and forms generation. It will provide clerical employees with a single application in which to capture, maintain, and access all electronic content. This content can include pleadings, notices, motions, orders, exhibits, briefs, judgments, writs of execution, and other papers typically filed with a court.

### Language Access

Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell has said the Rhode Island Judiciary is committed to providing language access services to limited English proficient (LEP) persons who come in contact with our courts. To promote the accuracy and integrity of judicial proceedings and to preserve fundamental principles of fairness and access to justice, he signed an Executive Order in 2012, directing that LEP persons should have meaningful access to the courts in a language that they are able to understand, and in which they are able to be understood by the respective court. The Administrative Office of State Courts continued to implement and expand upon that order in 2013.

The Judiciary's judges and staff work actively to identify litigants and witnesses whose primary language is not English and to provide language services to assist them in court proceedings. The Traffic Tribunal in 2013 implemented an automated

telephone system allowing for many frequently asked questions to be answered by navigating menu items. The system, which provides information in English and Spanish, is a model for the Judiciary to evaluate for future use in its other courts.

The Office of Court Interpreters (OCI) provided services in more than 25 languages to 8,332 individuals in 2013. Those services included all types of criminal and civil court proceedings in all counties. The office also provided services in Family Court mediation, juvenile services and the District Court's Pretrial Services. With the help of the OCI, the Judiciary has produced a number of informative brochures on court process in multiple languages.

In 2013, the OCI participated in several projects related to language access in the courts, projects that have deep impact on the communities served by the Judiciary. Projects included drafting and translating a written notice informing court users of their right to free interpreting services in the courts, as well as a complaint form on the Judiciary's website. The OCI also drafted and translated numerous court signs, which are prominently displayed in public areas throughout the state's courthouses, informing court users how to avail themselves of language services.

Court interpreters made several presentations at community and professional events, addressing availability of language services in the courts, a language identification card, and how to contact them. The OCI also conducted language service training sessions for front-line court staff and courtroom clerks throughout the Judiciary.

The Workers' Compensation Court aims to do its part to ensure that employees

with limited English proficiency are not taken advantage of, a problem that becomes more acute when the employee is undocumented or has other immigration issues. Hesitant to consult people outside their own community, these employees do not have access to even the most rudimentary information about their rights under workers' compensation law and often abandon any rightful claim. As part of its immigrant workers' project, the Workers' Compensation Court participated in an educational program at the workers' organization Fuerza Laboral to attempt to debunk the myths about work-related injuries and help them enforce their rights.

### Community Outreach

No effort to provide and improve access to justice is complete without an active community outreach program. The Judiciary strives to approach this important task on multiple fronts throughout the state court system.



Chief Justice Suttell at Pilgrim High School, Warwick, for Law Day.

In conjunction with the Rhode Island Bar Association, the annual Law Day event in May pairs a judge with a lawyer in visits to more than 30 schools throughout Rhode Island to talk about the law's importance to our society. But all year long, the Supreme Court's Office of Community



Retired United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor visited a Providence school in October 2013 at the Judiciary's invitation.

Outreach and Public Relations promotes understanding of our judicial system through education programs in schools across the state, courthouse tours for secondary school students, and media relations.

At the forefront of the educational outreach is the iCivics program founded in 2010 by retired United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor out of her concern that students were not learning enough information about their government to make them successful citizens. The iCivics project is a recognition that education is firmly in the digital age, and Justice O'Connor has fostered an approach to learning that makes civics education fun. Rhode Island Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell, state chairman of iCivics, has made numerous school visits and commissioned workshops to expand the program's reach to teachers across the state. The use of iCivics in Rhode Island schools increased by 89 percent in 2013 from the previous year,

according to the iCivics national office. The highlight in 2013 was a personal visit to a Providence school by Justice O'Connor with Chief Justice Suttell.

The five Supreme Court justices and court staff bring their important work to Rhode Island's cities and towns with one or two visits a year away from the Licht Judicial Complex to conduct public hearings for oral arguments involving appeals. In 2013, the Supreme Court heard cases at Exeter/West Greenwich Regional Senior High School and Central Falls High School.

Court outreach extends beyond the Supreme Court, however. In the fall of 2013, the District Court and Traffic Tribunal again participated in the annual Operation Stand Down in Cumberland, a weekend encampment for struggling veterans to receive social, medical, and legal services. Judges and magistrates preside over sessions with veterans who may have outstanding warrants, fines, or tickets and guide them toward resolution.

The Workers' Compensation Court in 2013 visited 19 schools in Rhode Island and met with more than 1,500 students as part of YES-RI, its 10-year-old youth employment safety program. YES-RI creates teams of judges, safety professionals, lawyers, and court personnel with the goal of reducing the number of work-related injuries for our next generation of workers through education about safety and responsibility.

The Supreme Court's Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit conducted an outreach campaign in 2013, distributing 21,606 information and safety pamphlets in English, Spanish, and Portuguese to police departments throughout the state. The unit also updated the pamphlets, posting them on its website, to reflect changes in the domestic violence and sexual assault laws.



The Supreme Court heard oral arguments at Central Falls High School in November 2013 as part of its "Riding the Circuit" outreach program.

The Judiciary's second year using Twitter continued to have an impact as an additional tool to spread the word about court services, operations, decisions, job openings, bid opportunities, and other news. The Twitter feed grew steadily to 1,250 followers by the end of 2013 and has been well received by the legal, academic, and media communities.

## Facilities

The Judiciary's Department of Facilities, Operations, and Security recognizes that people need to resolve their disputes in a place that is safe, secure, and convenient – a key component of the Judiciary's core mission of access to justice.

2013 brought numerous improvements to court facilities, including an extensive restoration of the Superior Court Presiding Justice's courtroom at the Licht Judicial Complex to its historical colors. The courthouse's stone courtyard was replaced and the main entries were refurbished.

The cellblock at the Murray Judicial Complex in Newport was renovated to

bring it into compliance with federal regulations and provide additional cells. Cellblocks at the Licht and Garrahy Judicial Complexes in Providence had ceiling, lighting, and plumbing improvements. Intrusion alarms were upgraded in three buildings and metal detectors were replaced statewide with state-of-the-art systems. X-ray machines were upgraded at the Licht and Murray complexes.

The heating, ventilating, and cooling division strives for efficiency while maintaining the comfort of judicial staff and the public. Improvements over the past year have been part of a multi-phase project to become energy efficient without adverse effect to the Judiciary's operating budget.

## Supreme Court Support Services

The Supreme Court Law Clerk Department supports access to justice by increasing the efficiency of our trial judges, providing legal research and writing assistance. In this capacity, law clerks work in courthouses in Providence/Bristol, Kent, Newport, and Washington Counties, as well as in Cranston at the

Traffic Tribunal. The law clerks support our judges on the Superior, Family and District Courts, and the Traffic Tribunal Appeals Panel. Their assignments encompass civil, criminal, and administrative matters.

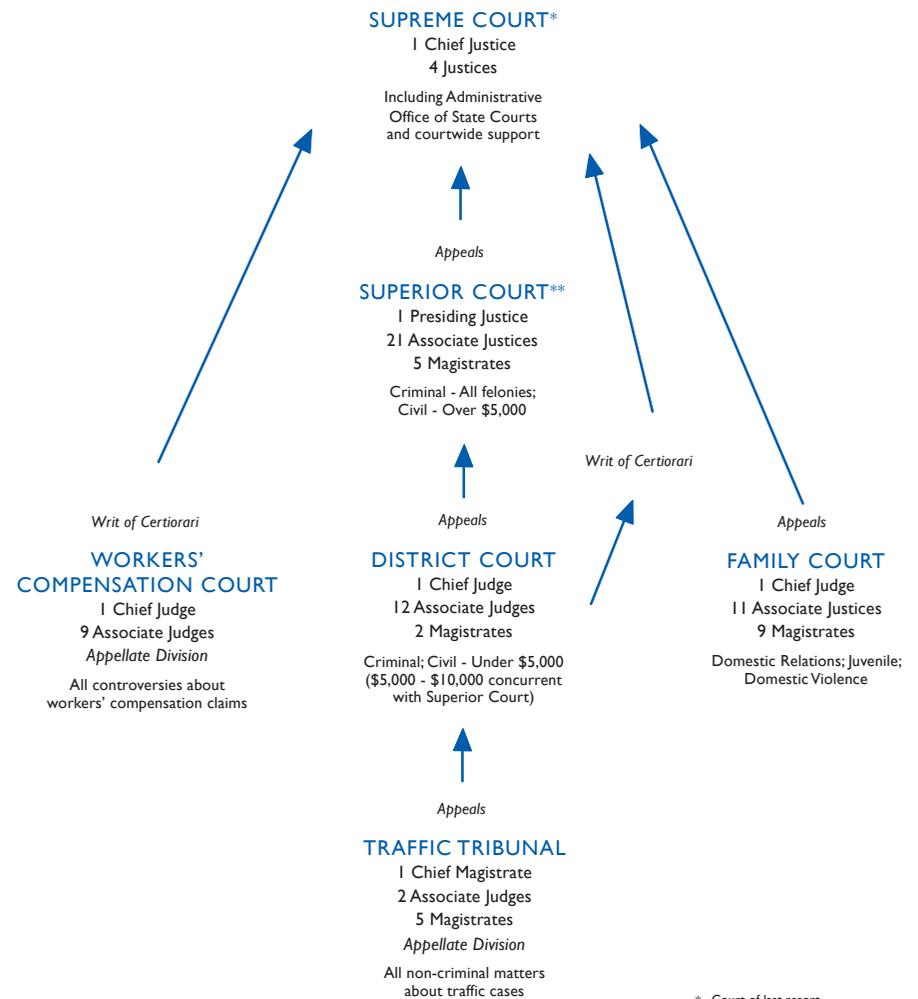
The Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Commission concluded its first full year of electronic filing of compliance information through the Supreme Court "Attorney Portal" on its website. The Attorney Portal maintains hundreds of accredited sponsors who offer more than 2,000 approved courses in continuing education. As a result, attorneys can easily submit continuing legal education credits. The electronic access has been well received. Judicial education programming in 2013 included judicial bench skills,

mental health issues in case management, social media as evidence, legislative updates, human trafficking, forensics, and criminal and case law updates.

The Judicial Records Center in Pawtucket, which holds more than 5.25 million case files, responded to more than 104,000 requests for records during 2013. This includes records requested by the various courts, as well as 34,000 records viewed by the public at the Records Center. The staff also provided access to 37,000 case files for researchers for credit agencies and social policy institutes. There were 8,372 archival requests in 2013 for court records that pre-date 1900. These include requests from genealogists as well as graduate students, lawyers, and professional historians.

# NAVIGATING THE COURT SYSTEM

## Rhode Island Court Structure



\* Court of last resort  
\*\* Court of general jurisdiction  
All other courts have limited jurisdiction

# COURT GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION



The chief judicial officers of the six courts in Rhode Island's unified judicial system are, from left: Superior Court Presiding Justice Alice Bridget Gibney; Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell; Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Chief Magistrate William R. Guglietta; Workers' Compensation Court Chief Judge George E. Healy, Jr.; Family Court Chief Judge Haiganush R. Bedrosian; and District Court Chief Judge Jeanne E. LaFazia.

## SUPREME COURT



With Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell, seated, from left to right, Maureen McKenna Goldberg, William P. Robinson III, Francis X. Flaherty, and Gilbert V. Indeglija.

## SUPERIOR COURT



Bottom, left to right: Edward C. Clifton, Patricia A. Hurst, Robert D. Krause, Alice Bridget Gibney (Presiding Justice), Melanie Wilk Thunberg, Michael A. Silverstein, and Netti C. Vogel.

Second row, left to right: Kristin E. Rodgers, William E. Carnes, Jr., Jeffrey A. Lanphear, Susan E. McGuirl, Stephen P. Nugent, Daniel A. Procaccini, Allen P. Rubine, Bennett R. Gallo, and Brian P. Stern.

Top, left to right: John F. McBurney III, Patricia L. Harwood, Luis M. Matos, Brian Van Couyghen, Walter R. Stone, Sarah Taft-Carter, Joseph A. Montalbano, Patrick T. Burke, and John J. Flynn.

## FAMILY COURT



Bottom, left to right: Debra E. DiSegna, Stephen J. Capineri, John A. Mutter, Michael B. Forte, Haiganush R. Bedrosian (Chief Judge), Kathleen A. Voccola, Francis J. Murray, Jr., Lauren D'Ambra, and John E. McCann III.

Top, left to right: Paul T. Jones, Jr., Charles Levesque, Armando O. Monaco II, Jeanne L. Shepard, Feidlim Gill, Patricia K. Asquith, Karen Lynch Bernard, Sandra Lanni, George N. DiMuro, Angela M. Paulhus, Edward H. Newman, and Rossie Lee Harris.

## DISTRICT COURT



Front, left to right: Pamela Woodcock Pfeiffer, William C. Clifton, Frank J. Cenerini, Jeanne E. LaFazia (Chief Judge), Elaine T. Bucci, Madeline Quirk, and Rafael A. Ovalles.

Rear, left to right: Joseph A. Montalbano, Stephen M. Isherwood, Colleen M. Hastings, Anthony Capraro, Mary E. McCaffrey, Joseph T. Houlihan, Jr., Christine S. Jabour, and Joseph P. Ippolito, Jr.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT



Bottom, left to right: Debra L. Olsson, George E. Healy, Jr. (Chief Judge), and Janette A. Bertness.

Top, left to right: Robert E. Hardman, George T. Salem, Jr., Edward P. Sowa, Jr., Dianne M. Connor, Hugo L. Ricci, Jr., and Robert M. Ferrieri.

## RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL



Bottom, left to right: Lillian M. Almeida, William R. Guglietta (Chief Magistrate), and Edward C. Parker.

Top, left to right: Joseph A. Abbate, R. David Cruise, Domenic A. DiSandro III, Alan R. Goulart, and William T. Noonan.

---

# RECOGNITION

---

## New Judicial Officers in 2013



**Honorable  
Joseph A. Montalbano**  
Associate Justice  
Superior Court



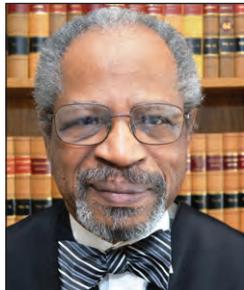
**Honorable  
Patricia K. Asquith**  
Associate Justice  
Family Court



**Honorable  
Sandra Lanni**  
Associate Justice  
Family Court



**Honorable  
Feidlim Gill**  
General Magistrate  
Family Court



**Honorable  
Rossie Lee Harris**  
Magistrate  
Family Court



**Honorable  
Paul T. Jones, Jr.**  
Magistrate  
Family Court



**Honorable  
Joseph A. Abbate**  
Magistrate  
Traffic Tribunal

---

# RETIREMENTS

---

## Judicial Officers Who Retired From the Bench in 2013



**Honorable  
Judith C. Savage**  
Associate Justice  
Superior Court



**Honorable  
Susan Kenny**  
Magistrate  
Superior Court

---

# IN MEMORIAM

---



**Honorable  
Robert F. Arrigan**  
Chief Judge, Retired  
Workers' Compensation Court

# CASELOAD DATA CHARTS

## At a Glance

JUDGES	EMPLOYEES	FACILITIES
64 Judges (2 vacancies) 4 Minorities 26 Female	FTE Count 723.3 authorized 684.9 average filled	6 Courthouses (2 administrative buildings) 74 Courtrooms (5 shelled courtrooms, 4 Grand Jury rooms, 2 mental health courtrooms)
22 Magistrates (2 vacancies) 3 Female 1 Minority		

Total Filings in 2013	182,396
-----------------------	---------

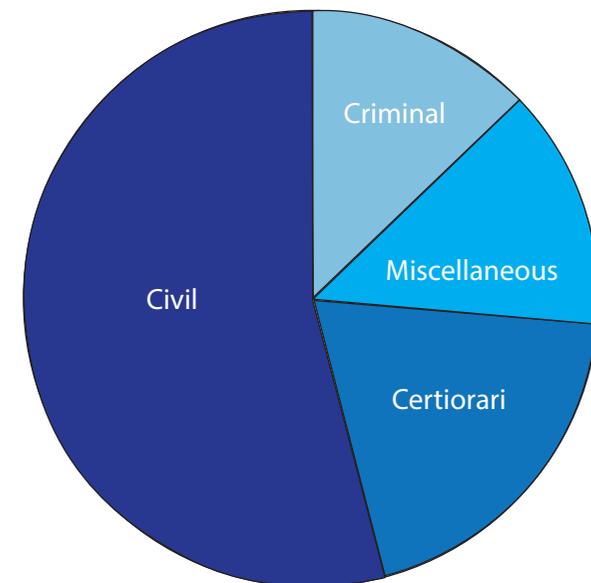
Total Dispositions in 2013	173,040
----------------------------	---------



## SUPREME COURT

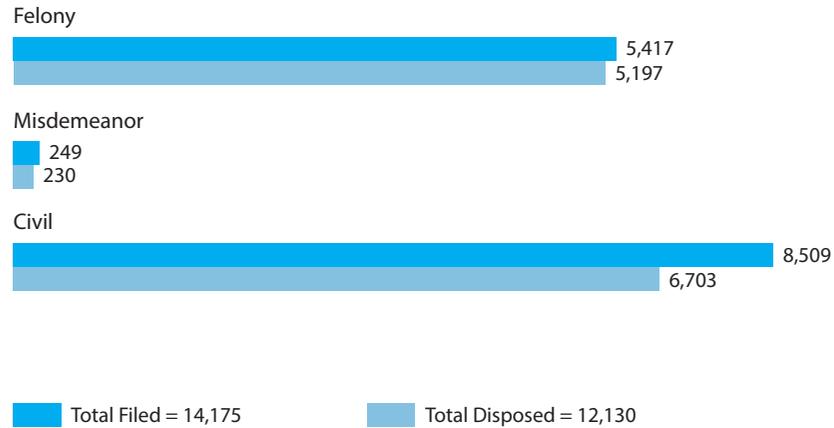
### 2013 Appellate Caseload

Criminal	47
Civil	194
Certiorari	72
Miscellaneous	46
<b>Total Filed</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>Total Disposed</b>	<b>393</b>



## SUPERIOR COURT

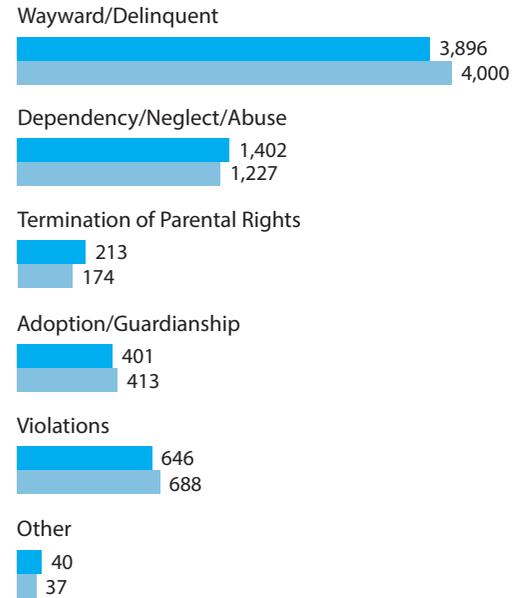
### 2013 Superior Court Caseload



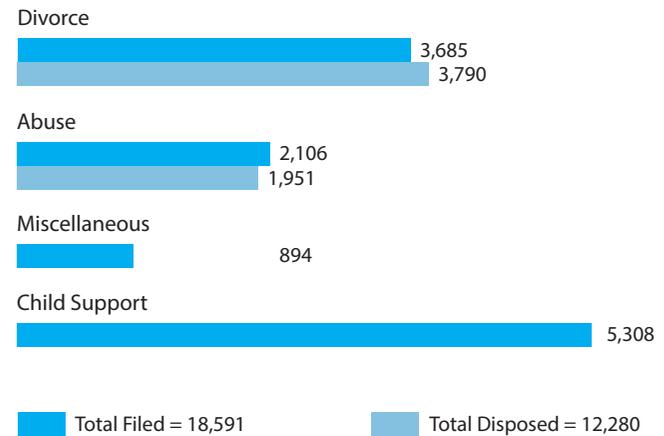
## FAMILY COURT

### 2013 Family Court Caseload

#### Juvenile

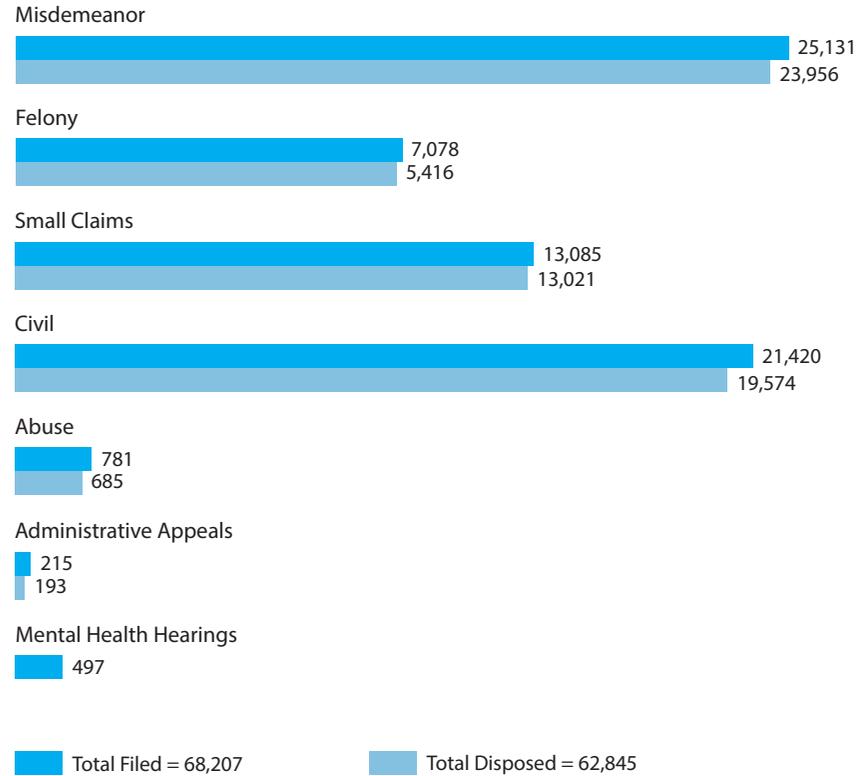


#### Domestic/Other



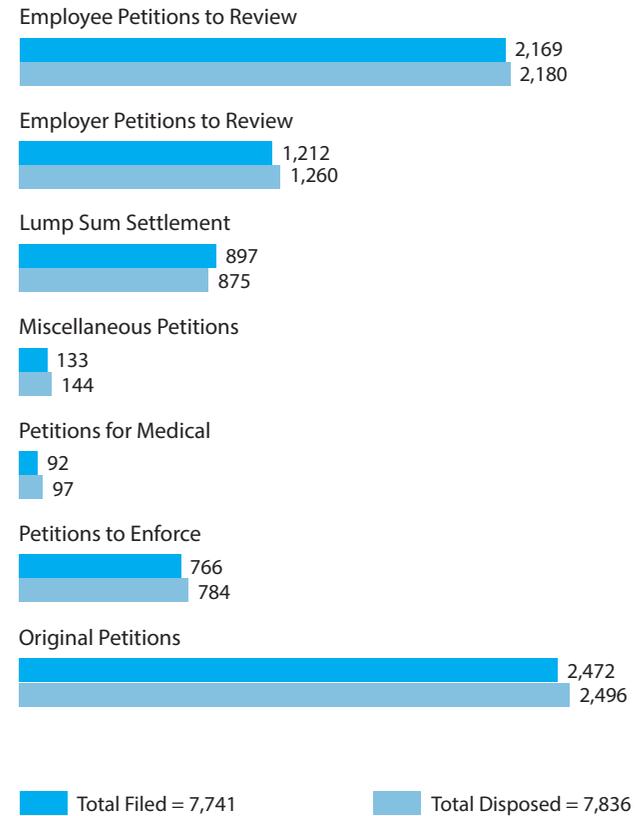
## DISTRICT COURT

### 2013 District Court Caseload



## WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT

### 2013 Workers' Compensation Court Caseload



# RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL

## 2013 Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Caseload

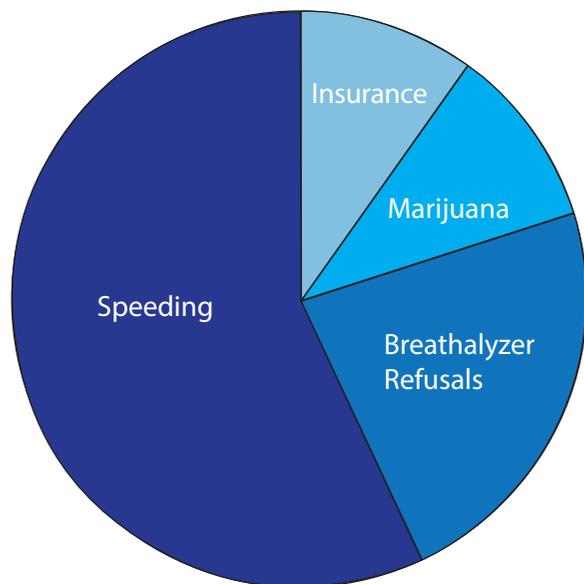
Traffic Tribunal Summonses Issued 80,401

### Traffic Tribunal Violations

Insurance	10,045
Marijuana	1,821
Breathalyzer Refusals	1,801
Speeding	28,703
Other	58,540

Total Violations 100,910

Total Summonses Disposed 82,972



### Photography credits

Page 5 – Courtesy of The Providence Journal

Page 6 – Portrait of Associate Justice Michael Silverstein by Associate Justice Robert D. Krause

Page 16 – Holly Hitchcock

Page 17 – Supreme Court, Holly Hitchcock; Superior Court, Associate Justice Robert D. Krause

Page 18 – District Court, Holly Hitchcock

Page 19 – Workers' Compensation Court, Holly Hitchcock

Page 21 – Portrait of Magistrate Susan Kenny by Associate Justice Robert D. Krause

Candid photographs by Holly Hitchcock, Craig Berke, Kara Picozzi, and Holly Bennett