

MUNICIPAL COURT

Municipal courts have existed in many Michigan cities and were organized subject to Act 5 of 1956, although most were organized under either Act 279 of 1909 or Act 269 of 1933. They have exclusive original jurisdiction over all ordinance violations, criminal jurisdiction formerly held by the justices of the peace, and civil jurisdiction in controversies where damages sought do not exceed \$1,500.

The District Court Act of 1968 abolished most of the municipal courts, but permitted some municipalities to retain their courts. Six such municipal courts remain.

The common pleas court in Detroit was a consolidation of the various justices of the peace courts that formerly existed in the city. Its jurisdiction in civil cases was greater than that of the old justice court. The common pleas court was abolished, effective September 1, 1981, by Act 438 of 1980.

The recorder's court of Detroit had jurisdiction over criminal cases within the city of Detroit. It also maintained a traffic and ordinance division to handle traffic and ordinance cases. This division was abolished, effective September 1, 1981, by Act 438 of 1980, and the criminal division was administratively merged with the Wayne Circuit Court.

Municipal judges must be lawyers and residents and electors of their municipalities. They are paid by the municipalities and are elected for 6-year terms.

Caseload

In 1997, there were 32,194 new cases filed in municipal courts, an increase of 1,262 (4.1%) from the 30,932 cases filed in 1996. The majority of the 1997 new filings were traffic cases, 28,774 (89.3%), while 2,747 (8.5%) were non-traffic criminal cases and 703 (2.2%) were civil cases. Between 1996 and 1997 criminal filings increased by 19.6% (451), traffic filings increased by 2.8% (771), and civil filings increased by 6.0% (40).

Of the 2,747 nontraffic criminal filings in 1997, 608 (22.1%) were criminal felony cases, 2,058 (74.9%) involved criminal misdemeanor cases, and 81 (2.9%) involved nontraffic civil infractions. In 1997, nontraffic criminal filings increased by 451 (19.6%) from 1996, nontraffic criminal misdemeanor filings increased by 301 (17.1%), and nontraffic civil infractions increased from 18 in 1996 to 81 in 1997.

In 1997, there were 28,774 traffic-related cases filed. Civil infraction violations accounted for 22,577 (78.5%) of the traffic filings, traffic misdemeanor offenses accounted for 5,758 (20.0%) of the traffic filings, while 409 (1.4%) were OUIL/OWL cases. Misdemeanor traffic offenses increased by 16.8% (830) from 1996 while civil infraction traffic offenses decreased by 0.2% (51).

Of the 703 civil cases filed in 1997, 489 (69.6%) were general civil cases, 3 (0.4%) were small claims, and 211 (30.0%) involved summary proceedings. Between 1996 and 1997 general civil offenses increased by 57 (13.2%), small claims decreased by 59 (95.2%), and summary cases increased by 42 (24.9%).

In 1997, there was an average of 5,366 new filings for each judge in municipal court. This represents a 4.9% increase from the 5,155 filings per judge in 1996.

At the end of 1997 there were 4,433 cases pending in municipal court. Of these, 1,307 (29.5%) were nontraffic criminal cases, 2,603 (58.7%) were traffic cases, and 523 (11.8%) were civil cases.

JUDGES OF MUNICIPAL COURTS

City	Judge	City	Judge
Eastpointe	Benedict Segesta Martin J. Smith	Grosse Pointe Park	Carl F. Jarboe
Grosse Pointe	Russell F. Ethridge	Grosse Pointe Woods	Lynne A. Pierce
Grosse Pointe Farms	Matthew R. Rumora		

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