

Message from the State Courts Administrator

February 2005

Dear Friends:

Over the last several years, judges and court personnel have worked tirelessly to unify Florida's trial court system through implementation of Revision 7 to Article V of the Florida Constitution. Now, I am proud to say that a unified trial court system in Florida is a reality. However, not surprisingly, much work still lies ahead.



During the next few years, the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) will continue to perform analyses pertaining to the unified trial court system. These analyses will focus on monitoring resource utilization and determining how best to report this information to those who will find it the most beneficial.

What some may not realize is that the OSCA has already been maintaining a coordinated and consistent system for reporting court statistics for decades. In order to allow for the monitoring of judicial caseloads at the state level, clerks of court in all sixty-seven counties report trial court statistics to the OSCA via the Summary Reporting System. Each year, OSCA staff examine and verify the data exhibited in this guide and the statistics are compiled and distributed throughout the judicial branch and beyond. Therefore, I am extremely pleased to present the *FY 2003-04 Statistical Reference Guide to Florida's Trial Courts*. This publication has been and will continue to be an essential reference in the management and oversight of the state courts system.

I wish to again extend my appreciation to all judges, clerks of court, and court personnel who contribute to the collection and analysis of trial court statistics. Your efforts exemplify what may be accomplished when we all work together for the common cause of an equitable, accountable and efficient justice system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elisabeth H. Goodner". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Elisabeth H. Goodner
State Courts Administrator

Cover Design by Xiaoyuan Zhu

Front Cover Photograph of the Dry Tortugas National Park by QT Luong and
Back Cover Photograph of the St. Mark Lighthouse.

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REPORT OVERVIEW

Florida's court system is organized in four different tiers, with a two-tier appellate court system and a two-tier trial court system. The appellate court system includes the Supreme Court of Florida and the five District Courts of Appeal. Additionally, the trial court system incorporates both circuit and county courts. The *Statistical Reference Guide* provides statistics pertaining to Florida's trial courts for Fiscal Year 2003-04 (July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004). These statistics were received and verified as of October 2004.

The Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) publishes the *Statistical Reference Guide* annually as a resource for the judicial branch and others who often request information on Florida's trial courts. The majority of the requests deal with filing and disposition data and are received from those outside of the OSCA including: state and local government agencies, circuit court administration, private sector businesses and citizens, clerks of court, and the media. In addition, all data can be accessed on the web at www.flcourts.org.

The information and statistics contained in this report are organized as follows:

Trial Court System Description - The first section of the report provides a map of the state of Florida identifying the location of each of Florida's twenty judicial circuits and sixty-seven counties along with a table providing the population for each circuit and county. Additionally, this section provides an explanation for how the data are collected, maintained, and verified for accuracy.

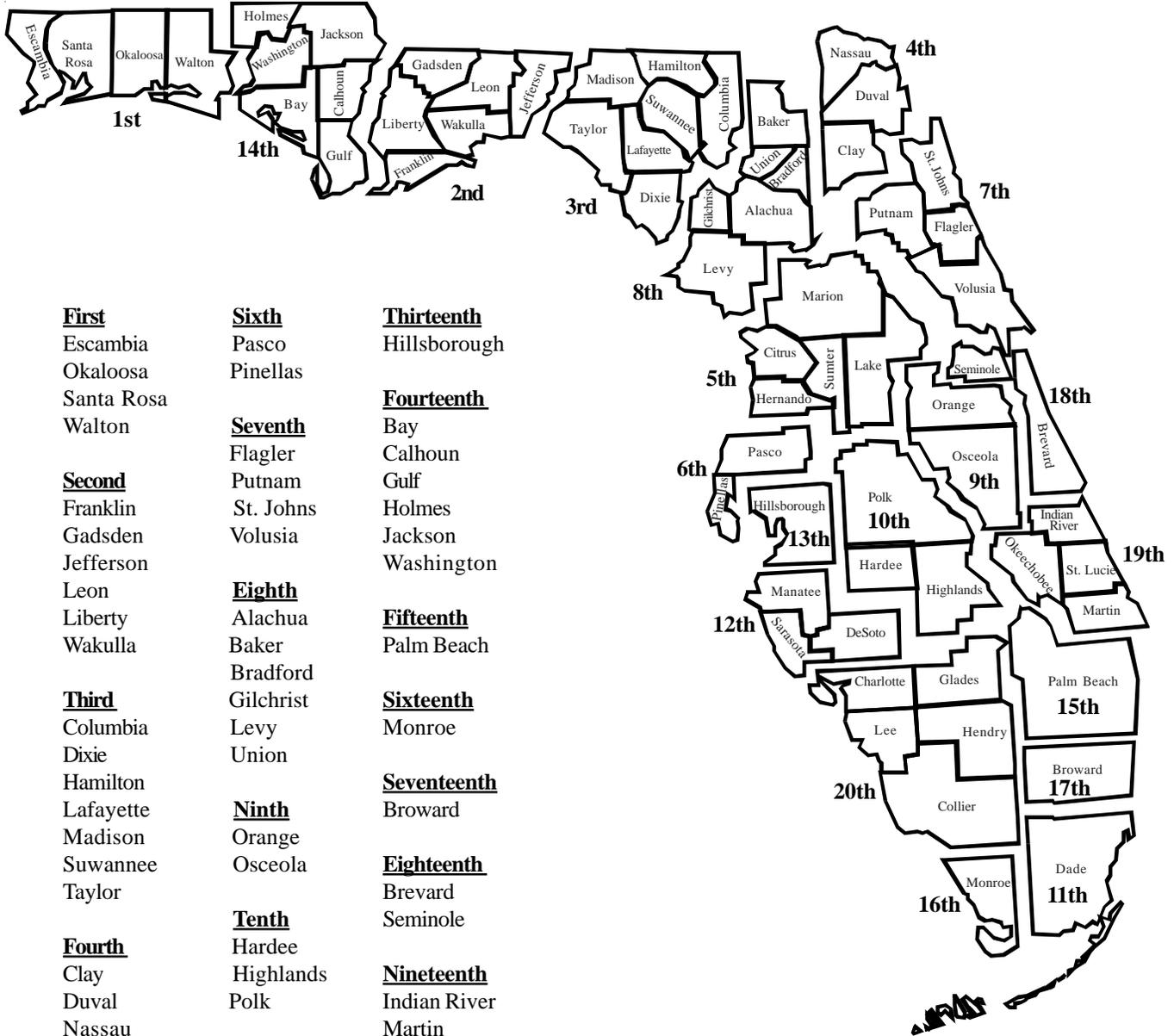
Overall Statistics - The Overall Statistics section provides a breakdown of the number of circuit and county judgeships for each judicial circuit. Also provided are statewide statistics for total circuit and county court filings and dispositions.

By-Division Statistics - The By-Division portion of the report displays filings, dispositions, and special proceedings data by each division of court (Circuit Criminal, Circuit Civil, Circuit Domestic Relations, Circuit Probate, Circuit Juvenile, County Criminal, and County Civil). Statewide, circuit, and county level data are furnished by various categories and case types that comprise each division.

Additional Information - This section provides contact information for gaining access to further statistics. The web address is also provided for accessing the on-line version of the *Statistical Reference Guide* and other on-line court statistics.

Glossary - The glossary provides definitions for common terms used across every division of the trial courts and those terms specific to each division.

JUDICIAL CIRCUIT MAP OF FLORIDA



First

Escambia
Santa Rosa
Okaloosa
Walton

Second

Franklin
Gadsden
Jefferson
Leon
Liberty
Wakulla

Third

Columbia
Dixie
Hamilton
Lafayette
Madison
Suwannee
Taylor

Fourth

Clay
Duval
Nassau

Fifth

Citrus
Hernando
Lake
Marion
Sumter

Sixth

Pasco
Pinellas

Seventh

Flagler
Putnam
St. Johns
Volusia

Eighth

Alachua
Baker
Bradford
Gilchrist
Levy
Union

Ninth

Orange
Osceola

Tenth

Hardee
Highlands
Polk

Eleventh

Dade

Twelfth

DeSoto
Manatee
Sarasota

Thirteenth

Hillsborough

Fourteenth

Bay
Calhoun
Gulf
Holmes
Jackson
Washington

Fifteenth

Palm Beach

Sixteenth

Monroe

Seventeenth

Broward

Eighteenth

Brevard
Seminole

Nineteenth

Indian River
Martin
Okeechobee
St. Lucie

Twentieth

Charlotte
Collier
Glades
Hendry
Lee

Trial Court System

FLORIDA POPULATION*
by Circuit/County
as of January 2003 and January 2004

Circuit/County (Circuit Ranking)	Total Population (as of January 2003)	Total Population (as of January 2004)	Percentage Change from 2003 to 2004
Circuit 1 (13)	657,380	667,118	1.5%
Escambia	302,432	305,111	0.9%
Okaloosa	180,193	182,911	1.5%
Santa Rosa	127,975	131,108	2.4%
Walton	46,780	47,988	2.6%
Circuit 2 (16)	355,905	362,104	1.7%
Franklin	10,426	10,518	0.9%
Gadsden	46,377	46,699	0.7%
Jefferson	13,483	13,698	1.6%
Leon	253,751	258,450	1.9%
Liberty	7,204	7,305	1.4%
Wakulla	24,664	25,434	3.1%
Circuit 3 (19)	169,965	173,160	1.9%
Columbia	58,730	60,071	2.3%
Dixie	14,630	14,977	2.4%
Hamilton	14,003	14,082	0.6%
Lafayette	7,316	7,480	2.2%
Madison	19,082	19,238	0.8%
Suwannee	36,154	36,847	1.9%
Taylor	20,050	20,465	2.1%
Circuit 4 (7)	1,040,110	1,055,497	1.5%
Clay	154,844	158,231	2.2%
Duval	822,621	833,246	1.3%
Nassau	62,645	64,020	2.2%

FLORIDA POPULATION*, Continued
by Circuit/County
as of January 2003 and January 2004

Circuit/County (Circuit Ranking)	Total Population (as of January 2003)	Total Population (as of January 2004)	Percentage Change from 2003 to 2004
Circuit 5 (10)	844,836	864,192	2.3%
Citrus	125,106	127,299	1.8%
Hernando	139,776	142,473	1.9%
Lake	238,279	244,563	2.6%
Marion	278,980	285,406	2.3%
Sumter	62,695	64,451	2.8%
Circuit 6 (3)	1,310,491	1,323,880	1.0%
Pasco	372,257	379,745	2.0%
Pinellas	938,234	944,135	0.6%
Circuit 7 (11)	738,960	753,760	2.0%
Flagler	60,513	63,176	4.4%
Putnam	71,782	72,236	0.6%
St. Johns	138,522	142,750	3.1%
Volusia	468,143	475,598	1.6%
Circuit 8 (17)	346,568	351,292	1.4%
Alachua	230,760	233,441	1.2%
Baker	23,300	23,599	1.3%
Bradford	26,877	27,208	1.2%
Gilchrist	15,389	15,853	3.0%
Levy	36,520	37,185	1.8%
Union	13,722	14,006	2.1%
Circuit 9 (5)	1,182,868	1,212,977	2.5%
Orange	976,116	998,286	2.3%
Osceola	206,752	214,691	3.8%

Trial Court System

FLORIDA POPULATION*, Continued
by Circuit/County
as of January 2003 and January 2004

Circuit/County (Circuit Ranking)	Total Population (as of January 2003)	Total Population (as of January 2004)	Percentage Change from 2003 to 2004
Circuit 10 (14)	626,639	636,135	1.5%
Hardee	27,418	27,610	0.7%
Highlands	90,036	91,464	1.6%
Polk	509,185	517,061	1.5%
Circuit 11 (1)	2,337,758	2,367,123	1.3%
Dade	2,337,758	2,367,123	1.3%
Circuit 12 (12)	663,576	675,385	1.8%
Desoto	33,461	34,284	2.5%
Manatee	283,543	288,934	1.9%
Sarasota	346,572	352,167	1.6%
Circuit 13 (6)	1,073,878	1,090,676	1.6%
Hillsborough	1,073,878	1,090,676	1.6%
Circuit 14 (18)	272,501	276,070	1.3%
Bay	154,204	156,115	1.2%
Calhoun	13,391	13,549	1.2%
Gulf	15,523	15,708	1.2%
Holmes	18,874	19,082	1.1%
Jackson	48,672	49,478	1.7%
Washington	21,837	22,138	1.4%
Circuit 15 (4)	1,204,907	1,228,202	1.9%
Palm Beach	1,204,907	1,228,202	1.9%
Circuit 16 (20)	80,670	80,650	0.0%
Monroe	80,670	80,650	0.0%

FLORIDA POPULATION*, Continued
by Circuit/County
as of January 2003 and January 2004

Circuit/County (Circuit Ranking)	Total Population (as of January 2003)	Total Population (as of January 2004)	Percentage Change from 2003 to 2004
Circuit 17 (2)	1,684,645	1,712,461	1.7%
Broward	1,684,645	1,712,461	1.7%
Circuit 18 (9)	897,904	913,234	1.7%
Brevard	504,733	512,902	1.6%
Seminole	393,171	400,332	1.8%
Circuit 19 (15)	501,158	511,382	2.0%
Indian River	120,437	122,696	1.9%
Martin	133,671	136,288	2.0%
Okeechobee	37,076	37,542	1.3%
St. Lucie	209,974	214,856	2.3%
Circuit 20 (8)	979,402	1,005,601	2.7%
Charlotte	151,232	153,956	1.8%
Collier	288,653	298,846	3.5%
Glades	10,705	10,877	1.6%
Hendry	36,345	37,327	2.7%
Lee	492,467	504,595	2.5%
State Total	16,970,121	17,260,899	1.7%

*January 2003 population figures were provided by the Office of Economic and Demographic Research of the Florida Legislature in September 2003. January 2004 population figures were provided by the Office of Economic and Demographic Research of the Florida Legislature in February 2004.

Trial Court System

Pursuant to section 25.075, Florida Statutes, the Summary Reporting System (SRS) was developed to provide the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) with data to assist the Supreme Court of Florida in its management and oversight role of the court system. The data are utilized as a measure of trial court activity in Florida, although, these data are not intended to measure the efficiency of state attorneys or public defenders. Data for the SRS are submitted to the OSCA by the sixty-seven clerks of court monthly via electronic or hard-copy submission. Exceptions to this are county criminal traffic, driving under the influence, and civil traffic infractions data which are obtained from the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles on an annual basis.

Upon receipt of the SRS reports from the clerks of court, the OSCA staff review the data for accuracy manually and through the utilization of an automated program designed to detect anomalies. If anomalies are detected, the county is contacted to verify or correct the data. SRS data are maintained in a dynamic database that is updated on a continual basis. Amendments to previously reported data may be submitted by the clerks up to three years after the original submission deadline. The OSCA also conducts field audits in clerk of court offices. These audits are conducted to ensure compliance to the SRS reporting guidelines as specified in the *Florida Summary Reporting System Manual* (www.flcourts.org).

Each fall, a permanent database is created for the previous fiscal year. Data amendments submitted by the clerks of court after the creation of the database are not incorporated into the permanent databases (although amendments are still incorporated into the dynamic database). If any data have not been submitted at the time the fiscal year database is generated, an automated program designed to estimate missing data may be utilized. The permanent database is utilized for reporting statistics in the certification of new judgeships and in standardized judicial branch reports regarding performance and accountability, long-range program planning, and performance-based budgeting. The data in the permanent file are also utilized in the production of this *Statistical Reference Guide*.

As previously mentioned, the trial courts are composed of two levels and seven different divisions. The circuit level includes criminal, civil, domestic relations, probate, and juvenile divisions and the county level consists of criminal and civil divisions. Within each division are several *categories* of cases. Moreover, within each of the *categories* are various *case types*. For instance, the Circuit Criminal division includes the following *categories*: capital murder, violent crimes, crimes against persons, crimes against property, and drug crimes. The crimes against property category includes the following *case types*: burglary, theft, forgery, fraud, worthless checks, other crimes against property, and other felony offenses. The detailed

categories and case types pertaining to each division are provided in the by-division portion of this report.

Note: All percentages provided in the report have been rounded. Therefore, totals may not equal 100%.