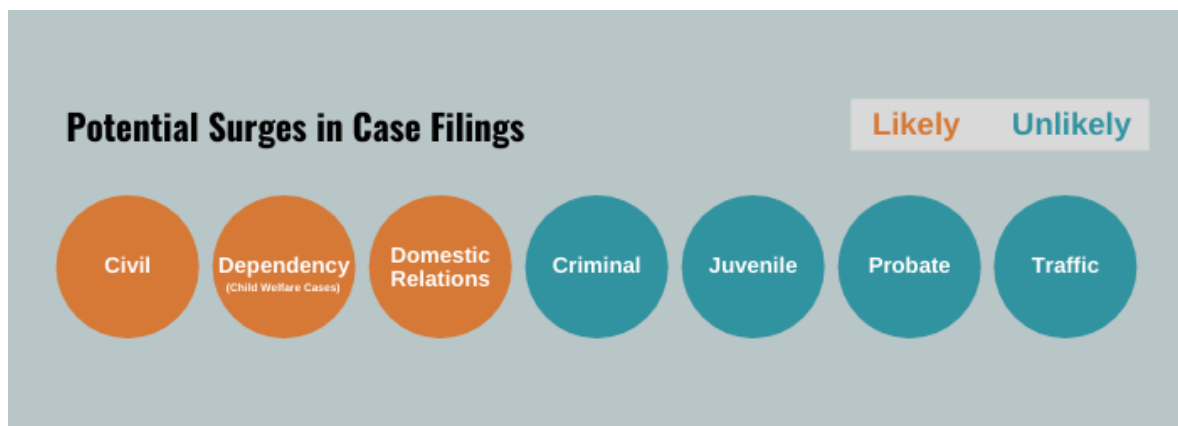


SJI Newsletter

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2020 Data Shed Light on Pandemic-Related Backlogs

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) researchers recently have received data from 12 states that show how the pandemic impacted case filings and dispositions in 2020.

The data – the first batch that covers all of 2020 – reveals two noteworthy findings:

- The number of criminal, traffic and juvenile cases is expected to return to normal this year, and no surge in cases is expected; but
- Family and civil case filings are expected to swell this year and may challenge courts, particularly in the areas of debt-collection, eviction and foreclosure.

Although the 12 states are geographically diverse, NCSC researcher Diane Robinson cautioned that the sample size is not large enough to make conclusions about the nation as a whole. Robinson and NCSC researcher Sarah Gibson, who analyzed the data, recently published [a paper about the data](#) as well as [an interactive dashboard](#).

“Civil and domestic relations cases are so low in 2020 (compared to 2019) that we strongly suspect that these cases are going to come in (in 2021 or 2022),” said Robinson, who added that they have been labeled “shadow cases.” She said she and others suspect that many people without lawyers assumed that they couldn’t file cases last year, or they didn’t know how to navigate the new environment that required a greater familiarity with technology. The “huge unknown,” she said, is how many of those people will file cases this year because they view courts as having re-opened and because they have become more familiar with technology.

Another unknown is how much of the drop in cases in 2020 was tied to the pandemic and the economic downturn. There may have been fewer civil cases, like slip-and-fall lawsuits, because people were out and about less. There may have been fewer family cases because those tend to drop when the economy is slumping. One other area of concern is dependency or child maltreatment cases. Many cases of child abuse and neglect begin with a call to a child abuse hotline by a mandated reporter. Because many children were not in school last year, they had less contact with adults outside their homes. As more children return to school, the number of child maltreatment reports – and dependency cases filed in the courts – is expected to rise. If and when a surge occurs, Robinson said she expects it will be a gradual increase that will begin this year – if it already hasn’t – and continue into 2022.

“I don’t think the dam is going to break,” she said, “but I think there will be an increase in flow.” The NCSC will continue to ask states this year to provide data that shed more light on how pandemic-related closings have impacted court filings and dispositions, and will report on the findings.



Enhanced Juvenile Justice Guidelines Demonstration Sites Project

SEEKING IMPERFECT JUVENILE COURTS

Did the COVID-19 Pandemic impede or stall your juvenile court improvement process? Have you identified opportunities to change practice post-pandemic? Whether you are just starting a new court improvement initiative or need assistance to restart your previous work, NCJFCJ has a unique opportunity to assist your court.

The [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#) (NCJFCJ), with funding from the [State Justice Institute](#) (SJI), is seeking juvenile courts that are interested in participating in the Enhanced Juvenile Justice Guidelines Demonstration Sites Project. If your court is interested in becoming a demonstration site, please click on the link below to complete the application. Applications are due by April 30, 2021.

What does it mean to be a demonstration site?

The jurisdictions that participate in the Enhanced Juvenile Justice Guidelines Demonstration Sites Project will engage in a two-year process to identify and address issues in adjudicating and delivering services in juvenile delinquency cases. [The Enhanced Juvenile Justice Guidelines](#) identify many different areas that courts can consider for improvement including improving timelines for case processing; using risk/need assessment information; reducing the use of fines and fees; implementing alternatives to detention; collaborating with the education system to reduce school pathways to the justice system; identifying and addressing gaps in services, and many more. Jurisdictions who

participate in the project will have access to regular assessment of court practice, technical assistance, strategic planning support, expert national training and trainers, and a peer support network. Please note, that while there is no site-specific funding available you will receive all of the support and tools you need to change your court practice.

[Begin Application](#)

Who should apply?

The project is open to all courts that work with delinquent offenses. Your program should be judicial lead and be prepared to bring together a group of system stakeholders who are committed to changing court practice. A commitment from your lead judge and the approval of your presiding judge is required. Tribal courts are encouraged to apply.

If you have any questions, please contact **Jessica Pearce, Senior Site Manager, NCJFCJ** at jpearce@ncjfcj.org or (775) 507-4799.



Opioid
Response
Network

We **HELP YOU**
HELP OTHERS

www.OpioidResponseNetwork.org | orn@aaap.org | 401-270-5900

What is the *Opioid Response Network*?

The *Opioid Response Network* is a group of diverse individuals and 40 national organizations working collaboratively and led by the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry to address the opioid crisis and stimulant use across the country. The *Opioid Response Network* provides free training and education in evidence-based practices in the prevention, treatment, and recovery of substance use disorders.

Visit www.OpioidResponseNetwork.org to submit a request to enhance your own efforts.

The *Opioid Response Network* works with states, health professionals, communities, organizations, healthcare centers, individuals, and justice and corrections settings. To support the development and delivery of resources and educational opportunities for those working in across justice and corrections and for the individuals they serve, the *Opioid Response Network* works in collaboration with several organizations forming a Justice and Corrections Stakeholder Committee.

Opioid Response Network Justice and Corrections Collaborators

These organizations include the:

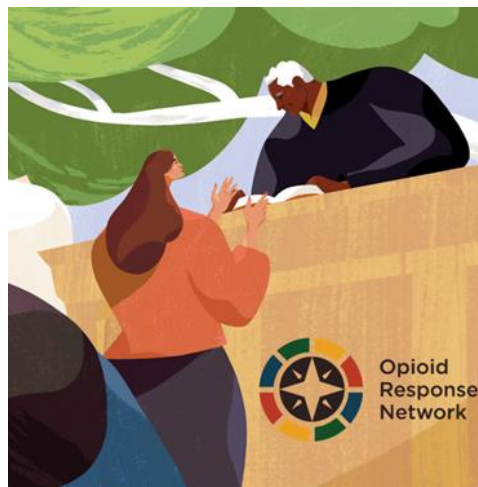
- Association of Prosecuting Attorneys
- American Probation and Parole Association
- Major County Sheriffs of America
- National Center for State Courts
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
- National Sheriff's Association
- State Justice Institute
- The Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative

The *Opioid Response Network*:

- Trained 45 state champion judges tapped by their Chief Justices from 48 states in substance use disorder prevention, treatment and recovery

- Provided support for a judge in rural Tennessee to develop an implementation plan to start providing medications for treating opioid use disorder in a community jail
- Trained over 600 healthcare physicians in California corrections facilities in motivational interviewing
- Facilitated a conference in Rhode Island for 230 people representing 34 states to learn about a program that reduced post incarceration drug overdose deaths by more than 60% Opioid Response Network Justice and Corrections Collaborators

Now, how can we help you? Submit a request at www.OpioidResponseNetwork.org to **start the conversation.**



Funding for this initiative was made possible (in part) by grant no. 1H79TI083343 from SAMHSA. The views expressed in written conference materials or publications and by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.



New 50-State Analysis to Focus on Critical Role of Juvenile Court Judges

Juvenile court judges are fundamental players in promoting public safety and improving outcomes for the youth who enter their courtrooms. A new project launched this week by The Council of State Governments Justice Center and the National Council on Juvenile and Family Court Judges will conduct an unprecedented 50-state analysis of state juvenile court policies and rules.

The analysis will inform a national report—to be released in spring 2022—with findings and recommendations to ensure that juvenile court judges' decisions are in the best interest of youth. By adopting a common set of judicial policies and practices, states can position judges to make effective decisions and drive improvement efforts that promote a more effective and equitable juvenile justice system. State Justice Institute is delighted to be funding such an impactful and vital project.

To read more about this project visit:

https://csgjusticecenter.org/2021/03/29/new-50-state-analysis-to-focus-on-critical-role-of-juvenile-court-judges/?mc_cid=33c347aeca&mc_eid=f470ba5595.

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The State Justice Institute is a federally-funded, non-profit corporation established by federal law in 1984 to improve the quality of justice in the state courts.



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