

2008 in Review

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Probate Court Administrator



The responsibilities of the Probate Court are somewhat divided into two types of functions. One of those functions centers on the processing of filings and hearings associated with the various case types under the Probate Court's jurisdiction. The other function focuses on monitoring fiduciary compliance with statutory requirements and managing required reviews of guardianships.

During the 2008 calendar year, the Probate Court processed more than 8,000 new filings and reopened cases. This includes new filings over all case types assigned to Probate as well as files that were reopened for additional proceedings after being closed. Assigned case types include: decedent estates, trusts, adult and minor guardianships and conservatorships, developmentally disabled individuals, mental health commitments, civil matters, protective orders, and other miscellaneous matters.

Information regarding all new filings for 2008 is detailed in the accompanying table. Other statistics of interest include that 998 wills were filed with the Probate Court for safekeeping and 75 motions were filed to establish delayed registration of foreign birth by court order.

In addition to processing new filings, as well as motions and petitions in ongoing matters, the Probate Court is responsible for tracking annual accountings by conservators, annual reports on the welfare of the ward for guardianships, and the filing of inventories in estate cases. Cases are also monitored to ensure the proper filing of Notices of Continued Administration.

The court is also required to perform regular reviews on guardianship cases. The reviews require an individual to visit the ward and make a report to the court on the status and well-being of the individual. For adult guardianships, a review must take place within one year of the appointment and every three years after that. In minor guardianships, there must be an annual review for all wards under the age of six. The Probate Court trains volunteers to perform many of these reviews.

On a daily basis, interaction with parties at the Probate counter continues to be an essential part of the services we provide. During 2008, Probate staff served more than 47,533 customers at our service counter and vault. This includes activities such as opening new files; processing motions; reviewing inventories, accounts and annual reports; and processing petitions for hospitalization in mental health cases.

It is always our goal to provide efficient and accurate service to everyone accessing the Probate Court. We are always looking for new ways to streamline and improve the way we fulfill our responsibilities and provide the best service possible.

NEW FILES OPENED	2007	2008
Small Estates	660	675
Supervised Estates	33	14
Unsupervised Estates	1,766	1,738
Trust – Intervivos	200	225
Adult Guardianships	830	844
Minor Guardianships	687	732
Adult Conservatorships	387	350
Minor Conservatorships	155	153
Mentally Ill	2,569	2,507
Guardianships (Developmentally Disabled)	213	360
Reopened Estates and Trust	211	238
Protective Orders	46	42
Civil and Other Matters	88	95
TOTAL	7,845	7,973

Active Cases as of December 31, 2008:

Estate and Trust Cases	3,908
Adult Guardianships	3,400
Adult Conservatorships	1,643
Minor Guardianship	2,765
Minor Conservatorships	1,509
Developmentally Disabled Guardianships	1,694
Civil and Other Matters	60
Total	14,979