

Updates and Reminders

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Each year, the courts in Michigan must report particular statistics to the Michigan Supreme Court. For probate courts these statistics include, among other things, information about the number of new filings, reopened cases, and the number of currently active cases on the court's caseload. These numbers are compiled with those of courts around the state and published as part of the Michigan Supreme Court's Annual Report.

While the numbers don't tell the whole story of the court's docket, they do assist us in analyzing workload, determining trends, and discovering areas that may need attention.

For example, during the 2009 calendar year, the numbers show that the Probate Court processed more than 8,000 new filings and reopened cases. This includes new filings of all case types assigned to Probate as well as files that were reopened for additional proceedings after being closed. Some of the case types assigned to Probate are decedent estates, trusts, adult and minor guardianships and conservatorships, developmentally disabled individuals, mental health commitments, civil matters, protective orders, and other miscellaneous matters. Statistics regarding the most common filings are listed in the table below.

Other statistics that might be of interest are that during 2009, more than 900 individuals filed their will with the Probate Court for safekeeping, and 78 motions were filed to establish delayed registration of foreign birth.

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.

Decedent estates 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.

On a daily basis, interaction with parties at the Probate counter continues to be an essential part of the services we provide. During 2009, Probate staff served nearly 48,000 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.

The Oakland County Probate Court is always looking to improve the manner in which we provide service to everyone who needs to access the court. Though we anticipate that reduced resources will make some aspects of this goal a little harder, we look forward to continuing our commitment to providing the best service possible.

NEW FILES OPENED	2008	2009	<u>Active Cases as of Dec. 31, 2009:</u>	
Small Estates	675	611	Estates & Trust Cases	4,063
Supervised Estates	14	21	Adult Guardianships	3,497
Unsupervised Estates	1,738	1,713	Adult Conservatorships	1,620
Trust - Intervivos	225	270	Minor Guardianships	2,571
Adult Guardianships	844	873	Minor Conservatorships	1,436
Minor Guardianships	732	607	Developmentally Disabled Guardianships	1,682
Adult Conservatorships	350	351	Civil & Other Matters	55
Minor Conservatorships	153	134	Total	14,924
Mentally Ill	2,507	2,733		
Guardianships (Developmentally Disabled)	360	329		
Reopened Estates	238	217		
Protective Orders	42	39		
Civil and Other Matters	95	94		
TOTALS	7,973	7,992		