



Supreme Court
STATE OF LOUISIANA
New Orleans

CHIEF JUSTICE

JOHN L. WEIMER

Sixth District

JUSTICES

ALLISON H. PENZATO
JOHN MICHAEL GUIDRY
CADE COLE
JAY B. MCCALLUM
JEFFERSON HUGHES
PIPER D. GRIFFIN

First District (pro tempore)
Second District
Third District
Fourth District
Fifth District
Seventh District

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March 6, 2026

VIA U.S. MAIL AND ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honorable Jack G. McFarland
Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations
P.O. Box 94062
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Chairman McFarland,

I am in receipt of your January 23, 2026, letter requesting that the Judicial Council “apply the weighted caseload study findings to all courts in any parish receiving more than \$1 million in state general funds for trial court operations.” The only parish that met this threshold is Orleans Parish. Per your request, attached is the weighted caseload analysis for Orleans Parish courts, which applies the district court case weights to Orleans Parish Criminal and Civil District Courts and Juvenile Court. The analysis also includes First and Second City Courts of New Orleans and New Orleans Municipal and Traffic Court.

In addition to the Orleans Parish data, the Supreme Court requested district court filing data from all district court clerks of court. The Judicial Administrator’s Office is analyzing these filings and applying the weighted caseload formula statewide to avoid consideration of Orleans Parish data in a vacuum.

As noted in the study, the weighted caseload formula is a preliminary starting point for assessing judicial need and represents the objective portion of a broader multi-factor analysis. Several qualitative considerations fall outside the formula’s scope such as self-represented litigants, the need for interpreters, and the availability of judicial support staff (bailiffs, law clerks, court reporters). The National Center for State Courts, which conducted the weighted caseload study, appropriately recommended conducting site visits to evaluate these factors. Such site visits have customarily included consultations with stakeholders, such as judges, clerks of court, district attorneys, local public officials, attorneys, and the general public. It should be noted that at this juncture the Judicial Council has not conducted site visits or weighed any of the qualitative factors that are paramount to a complete judicial workload analysis of the Orleans Parish courts.

Regarding the Orleans Parish court data, please note:

Letter to Chairman McFarland

March 6, 2026

Page 2

- (1) Limited jurisdiction courts, including First and Second City Courts of New Orleans and the New Orleans Municipal and Traffic Court, were not part of the Weighted Caseload Study. Instead, the district court case weights were applied to calculate judicial need. Accordingly, the analysis of limited jurisdiction courts in Orleans Parish is not intended to reflect the optimal number of judges in those courts or to assess their resource needs.
- (2) In 2025, Criminal District Court converted to a new case management system. While the new system is now operable, the extensive data migration process may have affected the court's reported filings for the 2025 calendar year. Because of this, it is recommended that the Judicial Council evaluate at least three years of filing data when conducting a judicial workload assessment.

On behalf of the Justices, we look forward to working with you during the upcoming legislative session. Please feel free to contact the Justices, Judicial Administrator Sandra Vujnovich (svujnovich@lasc.org), or incoming Judicial Administrator Brian Wiggins (bwiggins@lasc.org) with any questions or information requests.

Yours very truly,



John L. Weimer
Chief Justice, Louisiana Supreme Court

Attachment

cc: Justices (via electronic mail only)
Orleans Parish Criminal District Court Judges (via electronic mail only)
Orleans Parish Civil District Court Judges (via electronic mail only)
Orleans Parish Juvenile Court Judges (via electronic mail only)
First City Court Judges (via electronic mail only)
Second City Court Judge (via electronic mail only)
New Orleans Municipal and Traffic Court Judges (via electronic mail only)
Louisiana District Court Judges (via electronic mail only)

Orleans Parish Court Weighted Case Counts Minimal Judicial Officers and Report Specifications

Orleans Parish includes multiple courts with varying and sometimes overlapping jurisdictions. In computing Orleans Criminal District Court's case load, the calculations were based on filing numbers provided to the Supreme Court through their internal data collection system as well as the numbers reported and certified by the Orleans Parish Criminal Clerk of Court. Subsequently, the Chief Judge of Orleans Criminal Court worked with the Clerk of Court to review the reports and determined that additional cases were initially overlooked. These numbers were reviewed for accuracy and reliability; additional case filings were added to the formula computation. However, additional filing numbers are not reflected in the Supreme Court's Annual report, as they were provided and verified after the printing deadline.

- District Courts (trial courts)
 - Orleans Parish Civil District Court
 - Orleans Parish Criminal District Court
 - Orleans Parish Juvenile District Court
- Limited Jurisdiction Courts
 - New Orleans Municipal and Traffic Court
 - First City Court
 - Second City Court

The National Center for State Court's study evaluated the case 'weights' for both appellate and trial courts but did not evaluate case weights for limited jurisdiction (city) courts. Any information provided about the cases filed for the limited jurisdiction courts is not intended to reflect the number of 'appropriate' judges in those courts or to assess their resource needs. Instead, the inclusion of cases filed in other courts serves to:

- Provide a clear picture of the total cases filed in Orleans as a whole and the resources available to meet those needs.
- Heighten accuracy of comparisons across jurisdictions. Because other parishes/jurisdictions differ in their configuration and may have adjudicative authority for cases/case-types filed in Orleans limited jurisdiction courts, review of other jurisdictions' workload will provide necessary context.

The numbers referenced below are based on counts provided by court Clerks and the CMIS criminal data (Orleans Parish Criminal District Court only). In addition to the annual report data, Orleans Civil District Court and First and Second City Courts provided counts of everything in their databases, using their existing case-types. Database information was used to assess case weights but did not add to or supplement the filing data previously reported by the respective courts for the LASC Annual Report.

Based on the case types and sub-categories that were determined during the NCSC study period, the categories were mapped to the primary case-types selected by the district court advisory committee and then assigned their related case weights.

Orleans Parish District Courts

District Court Case Types and Weights

Case Type	Case Weight (in minutes)
General Civil	77
Contracts and Torts	48
Property	36
Probate/Succession	27
Family/Domestic	150
Civil/Discovery Protective Orders	51
Juvenile Civil/Non-Delinquency	105
Juvenile Delinquency	50
Capital/ Life without Parole	696
Violent Felonies	354
Non-Violent Felonies	78
Misdemeanor	18
Specialty Courts/Problem-Solving Courts	428

Total Case Minutes per year, per district judge: 77,258 (based on 6.13 hour day)

Civil District Court

Case Type	Case filings	Cases x Minutes	Minimum required	Current N Judges
General Civil	2,739	210,903		
Contracts and Torts	4,011	192,528		
Property	1,132	40,752		
Probate/succession	1,299	35,073		
Family/domestic	3,338	500,700		
Orleans Civil Totals	12,519	979,956	12.7	14

Criminal District Court

Case Type	Case filings	Cases x Minutes	Minimum required	Current N Judges
Misdemeanors	1,218	21,924		
NV Felonies	1,714	133,692		
V Felonies	1,018	360,372		
Capital/LWOP	113	78,648		
Specialty courts	46	19,688		
Orleans Criminal Totals	4,109	614,324	8.0	13

The filing count above may vary from the numbers provided for the annual report. As referenced previously, more filings were added after further review, and relative to the data migration to the new case management system. Also, civil forfeiture hearings and post-conviction relief applications that might have been included in the annual report counts were excluded here because these matters, reported as additional “filing,” are relative to a previously filed criminal case and if counted would be duplicative.

The specialty court detail was provided by the Supreme Court Drug Court databases and is lower than expected. Pre-trial monitoring programs and misdemeanor probation programs that are the purview of court staff are not included in specialty court counts; however, any cases that were accepted/filed are counted in the relevant case-type category. Should there be verifiable case counts higher than indicated below, additional filings would necessitate a supplemental computation.

Juvenile Court

Case Type	Case filings	Cases x Minutes	Minimum required	Current N Judges
Juvenile Civil	476	49,980		
*Juvenile Delinquency	930	46,500		
Orleans Juvenile Totals	1,406	96,480	1.2	4

*includes juvenile traffic citations

The juvenile counts come from the court’s annual report submission. An inquiry to the Chief Judge and clerk was made for filing data confirmation. Verified supplemental filings here would also necessitate a new computation. Also of interest is whether additional context or nuances in filing practices might be relevant. Specifically, specialty court programs and the number of cases enrolled in 2025 would add value to workload. Supreme Court staff visits to other juvenile courts are recommended to determine whether there are inconsistencies in case filing and counting methods.

Orleans Municipal & City Court Cases

Orleans Limited Jurisdiction Courts	Case Type	Count	Minutes	Minimum Required	Current N Judges
First City Court	Property	4,307	155,052		
	Contract & Torts	5,160	247,680	5.2	3
Second City Court	Property	1,068	38,448		
	Contracts & Torts	388	18,108	.73	1
Municipal Court	Misdemeanors	3,579	64,422		
	Contested traffic	14,656	263,808	4.2	7
Totals		29,158	787,518	10.1	11