

This is an archived Press Release from NJ Courts

[New Jersey Courts](#)

[|Press Releases Home|](#)

For further information:

Winnie Comfort
Tamara Kendig
609-292-9580

For immediate release: July 31, 2002

New Jersey Courts Reduce Backlogged Cases for 2nd Consecutive Year; Vast Majority of Cases Now Current

The New Jersey Judiciary handled more cases and processed them more timely while substantially reducing the number of cases in backlog, according to the New Jersey Judiciary Court Management Report, June 2002, released by Judge Richard J. Williams, administrative director of the courts. The report reflects an overall 22 percent backlog drop-- more than 9,000 fewer backlogged cases-- and dramatic backlog reductions in specific case types; from a 49 percent drop in domestic violence backlog to a 27 percent decrease in civil backlog. The number of backlogged cases in the criminal division is the lowest in 20 years.

"The goal set by Chief Justice Poritz, the driving force behind this effort, is to provide fair, efficient and less costly justice," said Judge Williams. "Clearly, one way to achieve that goal is through the timely disposition of cases brought to us by New Jersey's citizens. We are successfully reducing backlog, and at the same time keeping newer cases current."

"In order to ensure quality control, we measure the age of each and every case - more than one million cases in all," Judge Williams explained.

"We have established time standards for each type of case because the public has a right to know what to expect from its court system. While it is inevitable that some cases will require more time than the goals we have set, we endeavor to keep those cases to a minimum. We know that the longer it takes to resolve a case, the higher the cost to litigants, both financially and emotionally," Williams added.

According to New Jersey Judiciary standards, a divorce case should be resolved within 12 months. Child support, custody and visitation cases not associated with a divorce should be resolved within 3 months. Civil cases should be resolved within 12, 18 or 24 months, depending on the degree of complexity of the case. Criminal cases should be disposed of within four months after a defendant is indicted by a grand jury. New Jersey's Judiciary defines "backlog" as a measurement of cases that go beyond the established time goals.

This year's 22 percent overall backlog reduction follows a 21 percent decrease at the end of the previous court year. Backlog reductions were achieved in almost all case-type areas statewide, despite an increase in filings to more than one million cases. From July 2000 through June 2001, 970,644 cases were filed in New Jersey's courts. From July 2001 through June 2002, filings increased by three percent to 1,001,227 cases. Even with the increased filings, the backlog of cases in the state's courts dropped from 41,232 to 31,969, or 9,263 cases.

Today, the vast majority of New Jersey court cases meet the time standards set by the Judiciary. Eighty-five percent of all civil cases are current, and 92 percent of special civil cases, including small claims, landlord-tenant matters, and

monetary actions not exceeding \$10,000, are counted as current. In the family division, 92 percent of all cases are current, including 95 percent of child support, custody and visitation cases not part of a divorce. Sixty-three percent of criminal division cases are current.

Judge Williams praised judges and court staff around the state. "The dramatic reduction of cases in backlog continued because of the leadership of our assignment judges and presiding judges, and the intensive efforts of our trial court judges, court managers and staff. They have enabled us to continue to improve the quality of service we provide to the public," he said.

[Charts on backlog \(PDF\)](#) are attached. The [full text of the report](#) (PDF) is available on the Judiciary's Web site at www.njcourtsonline.com The report includes terms and definitions, data on each county and statewide numbers.

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | ©2010 New Jersey Judiciary