



47th District Court

2023 Annual Report

Court Mission and Values

The Court's mission is to provide a safe, neutral, and impartial forum for peaceful resolutions of public and private disputes. The Court strives to ensure: Access to Justice; Expedition and Timeliness; Equality, Fairness and Integrity; Independence and Accountability; and Public Trust and Confidence.

Court Jurisdiction

As part of “Michigan’s One Court of Justice,” the 47th District Court has jurisdiction over the following case types arising in the Cities of Farmington Hills and Farmington:

Criminal Felonies (through preliminary exam)
 Traffic and Zoning Infractions
 Landlord-Tenant Disputes

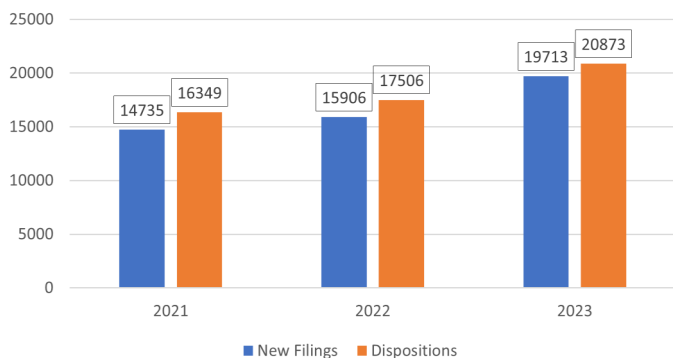
Criminal Misdemeanors
 General Civil Lawsuits (up to \$25,000)
 Small Claims Lawsuits

Court—Funding Unit Relationship

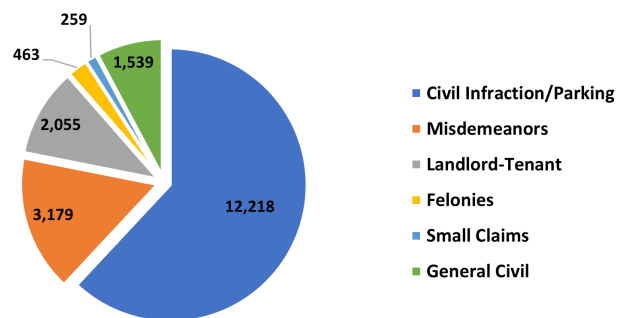
Although not an agency of either Farmington Hills or Farmington, by statute, the Court is mutually funded by both under a formula adopted by the two Cities that accounts for both population and annual caseload.

While being careful to protect the independence of judicial decision making (the Cities are litigating parties in the majority of the cases at the Court), **the Court consistently strives to work with the Cities as partners in government to ensure the most efficient and effective use of public resources.**

2021 - 2023 Case Filings and Dispositions



2023 Case Filings by Type



Meet the Judges

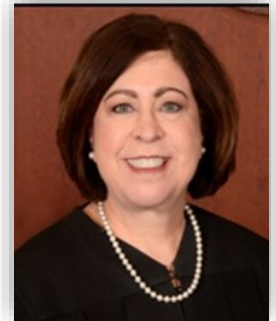


First elected to the bench in November 2002, Judge James B. Brady was re-elected to his fourth six-year term in November 2020. In January 2024, he began his sixth two-year term as chief judge, having last served as chief judge from January 2020 through December 2021. From 1985-2002, he served the Court as a magistrate. He spent five years as an assistant prosecutor for Oakland County (1980-1984), and worked at a private law firm from 1984-2002.

Judge Brady holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and a Juris Doctor degree from Wayne State University Law School.

In 2023, Judge Parker completed her 30th year as a district court judge. She is the longest serving judge in the history of the 47th District Court, as well as the longest serving judge in Oakland County. She was first elected in 1992 and won re-election to a sixth six-year term in November 2022. Prior to becoming a judge, she served the Court as a magistrate and also maintained a private law practice in Farmington Hills.

Judge Parker holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and a Juris Doctor degree from Wayne State University Law School.



Appointed 47th District Court Attorney Magistrates

Michael Sawicky

Brandy Hart

Mark Berke

Changes in Court Administration — In December 2023, Court Administrator Stacy Parke retired after over 25 years of dedicated service to the Court.

The Court has much gratitude for the legacy that Ms. Parke created. She implemented many strategies to make the 47th District Court a leader in establishing court collection programs. Locally, she was elected to serve on the City of Farmington Hills Pension Board. She also took a leadership role statewide serving as a Board Member for the Michigan Court Administrators Association and as Treasurer for the Southeast Michigan Court Administrators Association.



The Judges didn't have to look far for Ms. Parke's replacement. The natural fit to fill this position was the Court's own Deputy Court Administrator and Attorney Magistrate Matthew Friedrich. Mr. Friedrich served as the Deputy Court Administrator since Summer 2021. Prior to that, he was a part-time Attorney Magistrate with the Court beginning November 2014 and maintained his own private law practice. Mr. Friedrich previously worked at the court from 1999-2000. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Michigan State University and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Detroit Mercy. Mr. Friedrich is a Certified Court Manager through the National Center for State Courts and will become a Certified Court Executive in May 2024.

Filling the Deputy Court Administrator position is Michele Muscat. She previously worked at the Court as a probation officer from 2001-2014 before moving on to the State Court Administrative Office where she spent the last ten years. Ms. Muscat was a court analyst before becoming the Region VI Administrator, serving as the Michigan Supreme Court's liaison to all of the courts in Oakland, Macomb, Lapeer, and St. Clair counties. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Madonna University and a Master's degree in Public Administration from Oakland University. Ms. Muscat is a Certified Court Manager through the National Center for State Courts.

The 47th District Courthouse Turns Twenty Years Old!

On July 1 2003, the 47th District Court opened its doors to the public. Twenty years later, the building is still an architectural beauty and its design is as functional as it ever was. The pictures below include the groundbreaking ceremony, staff visiting the in-progress construction, dignitaries at the ribbon cutting ceremony, and finally, the finished product.



Sobriety Court

Since 2005, the 47th District Court has focused on protecting society and reducing crime by targeting substance abuse and addiction through intervention, treatment, and offender accountability. Under strict court supervision, eligible participants in the voluntary 24 month, four phase program, must comply with court-ordered requirements including substance abuse treatment, alcohol and drug testing, education and life skill development.

Graduates of the program continue to report improved outcomes in their personal life. The most recent recidivism data from the State Court Administrative Office shows that zero percent of program graduates had reoffended during the study period.

Community Work Program

The Community Work Program (CWP) began in 1986 to provide a sentencing alternative to help address overcrowding at the Oakland County Jail. The program provides free labor and supervision costs for community work projects and is a partnership between the Court and the Cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

For calendar year 2023, the program provided numerous city departments and the Court with 4,128 hours of labor, which equates to over \$42,000 in free labor. The program also provided for over \$25,000 in supervision/operational costs funded through participant-paid fees.

Judge Parker Honored by the Jewish Bar Association of Michigan



On May 22 2023, in front of more than 150 guests, the Jewish Bar Association of Michigan honored our very own Judge Parker with the Avern Cohn Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Avern Cohn Lifetime Achievement Award is an honor bestowed upon the most established members of our community who have dedicated their lives to the ethical and just practice of law, legal community, and community-at-large. Past recipients include the late Honorable Avern Cohn himself and the Honorable Bernard Friedman, both United States District Court Judges for the Eastern District of Michigan.

This award was presented to her by her longtime friend, Judge Michelle Friedman Appel of the 45th District Court in Oak Park.

Financials

It's a common misconception that the Court keeps the money it collects; in reality, the collected money is transmitted on a monthly basis to other units of government as follows . . .

The State of Michigan receives:

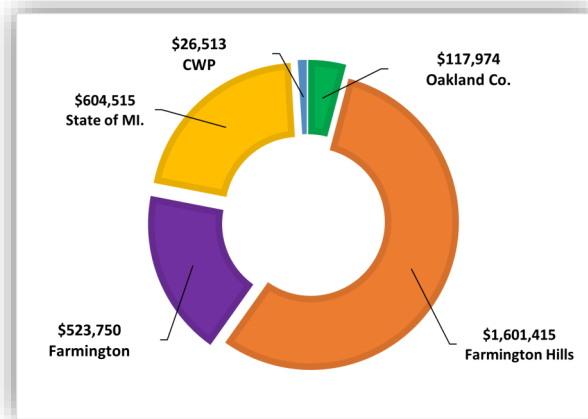
- \$40 from each traffic civil infraction and \$10 from each non-traffic civil infraction.
- \$50 costs and \$75 Crime Victim Rights fee on each misdemeanor.
- 56% - 79% from each civil case filing fee.
- \$10 from each \$20 motion fee.
- \$30 from each \$45 Driver's License Clearance Fee.

The Oakland County Library Fund receives:

- The penal fine portion of fees on all *state law* cases
- 30% of the penal fine on *local ordinance* motor carrier cases.

All other money goes to the local funding units - the City of Farmington and the City of Farmington Hills - based on case venue.

Transmittal Amounts (7/1/22—6/30/23)



Collections on Delinquent Court Fees

One of the tools the Court utilizes to collect delinquent fines and costs is garnishing state income tax refunds. As indicated below, from 2017-2022, the Court has collected over \$800,000 via tax garnishments. The Court continues to collect these outstanding monies throughout the year.

Year	# of Cases	\$ Collected
2017	723	\$111,932
2018	752	\$147,273
2019	700	\$145,501
2020	713	\$139,415
2021	770	\$131,968
2022	750	\$147,796
TOTAL	4,408	\$823,885

In addition to tax garnishments, the Court continues to utilize a show cause docket to collect past due payments. Since its inception in 2003, the show cause docket has collected over \$9 million in past due payments. The court emphasizes collaborative solutions for the delinquent balances, working with each individual to find the right solution. Sometimes that means establishing a payment plan, and sometimes that means working on waiving a portion of court costs/fees, when warranted, to give individuals the opportunity to make a payment and have their matter successfully closed.