

Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2014

Juvenile Court of Clayton County, Georgia



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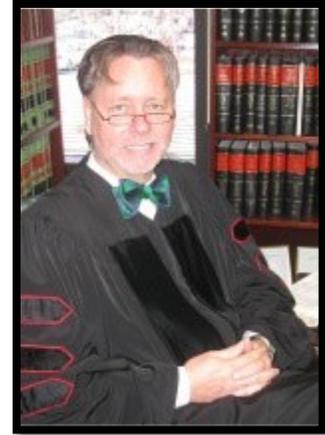
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Empowering the Community | Restoring Families

Dear Fellow Citizens:

I am pleased to present to you Clayton County Juvenile Court's report for fiscal year 2014. We strongly believe the citizens of Clayton County are entitled to be informed about the functioning of their Juvenile Court and trust that you will find this report useful and informative.

The latter half of 2013 and early part of 2014 were significant for our court. We witnessed the implementation of Georgia's new juvenile code, much of which is modeled on the practices of our very own court. We also continued our work with the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative, and stand ready to help spread the initiative across the state of Georgia. Additionally, in concert with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and our collaborative partners within the county's leadership, we made great strides in strengthening and sustaining our System of Care, a model that has garnered a lot of national attention as a best practice.



As you will note from the statistical information presented in this report, we continue to see a trend of shifting workloads, from formal processing to informal processing. This is intentional and is in line with the new state law as well as a plethora of research that warns of the dangers of pulling the wrong children into the juvenile justice system. We know that detaining a child is likely to increase his or her chances of reoffending; that detention has a detrimental effect on children with mental health issues; and that detention greatly decreases the likelihood of finishing high school. With such detrimental impact attributed to the detention of children, we owe it to the children and families we serve, as well as the community as a whole, to be judicious in our use of detention. Simply put, detention should be reserved for those children who scare us, not those that merely make us angry.

Taking this approach requires strong cooperation from our community partners, and we are fortunate in Clayton County to have strong collaborative ties with our stakeholders. I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank the Clayton County Board of Commissioners, Clayton County Superior Court, Clayton County Public Schools, Clayton County School Police, Clayton County Sheriff's Office, Clayton County Police Department, Clayton County Board of Health, Clayton County District Attorney's Office, Clayton County Public Defender's Office, the Division of Family and Children Services and Department of Juvenile Justice for their dedication to the welfare of Clayton County's children. Without their help and the innovative thinking and work of our staff, we would not be successful in our endeavor to protect the safety of the public, while holding youth accountable and restoring them and their families as strong, productive individuals.

I am extremely proud of the national attention our work has received, including coverage in the *Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, the *CBS Evening News*, as well as numerous other periodicals and scholarly journals.

Sincerely,

Steven C. Teske
Chief Judge
Clayton County Juvenile Court

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This report was compiled by Juvenile Court Chief of Staff, Colin Slay (770.477.3248; colin.slay@co.clayton.ga.us) and covers the period of July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. The majority of the data presented in this report was provided by Canyon Solutions (Two Renaissance Business Center, 40 North Central Avenue, Suite 1400, Phoenix, Arizona 85004).

Juvenile Court Services

Vision and Mission of the Juvenile Court

The *Vision* of the Clayton County Juvenile Court is a safe and secure community that utilizes prevention and treatment services in collaboration with families and other organizations to ensure the well-being of children.

The *Mission* of the Clayton County Juvenile Court is to endeavor to protect and restore the children of the county as secure and law-abiding members of society, and to strengthen families and reduce the need for further intervention by the prompt treatment, rehabilitation, and supervision of delinquent and unruly children and decisive processing of dependency cases.

Jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court

Except for the offenses commonly referred to as the “Seven Deadly Sins,” the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA), § 15-11-10, gives exclusive original jurisdiction over matters concerning a child who:

1. Is alleged to be delinquent;
2. Is alleged to be a child in need of services;
3. Is alleged to be a dependent child;
4. Is alleged to be in need of treatment or commitment as a mentally ill or developmentally disabled child;
5. Is alleged to have committed a juvenile traffic offense; or
6. Has been placed under the supervision of the court or on probation to the court (provided that the jurisdiction shall be for the purpose of completing, effectuating and enforcing such supervision or probation begun prior to the child’s 17th birthday).

Georgia law does require that certain serious felony offenses be handled by the Superior Court if committed by a child 13 to 17 years old (OCGA § 15-11-560). Commonly known as the “Seven Deadly Sins,” these offenses include: murder, voluntary manslaughter, rape, aggravated sodomy, aggravated child molestation, aggravated sexual battery, and armed robbery if committed with a firearm.

OCGA § 15-11-2 (10) defines a “child” as an individual who is:

1. Under the age of 18 years;
2. Under the age of 17 years when alleged to have committed a delinquent act;
3. Under the age of 22 years and in the care of the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS);
4. Under the age of 23 years and eligible for and receiving independent living services through DFCS; or
5. Under the age of 21 years who committed an act of delinquency before reaching the age of 17 years and who has been placed under the supervision of the court or on probation to the court for the purpose of enforcing orders of the court.

Number of Youth Served in Fiscal Year 2014: 4,153

The Juvenile Court receives referrals from more than ten local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies; DFCS; school officials; parents; and other sources. These referrals are commonly called “complaints.”

There is no filing fee for submitting a complaint to the Juvenile Court; however, there are fees associated with publication in certain dependency matters, and supervision fees are often assessed in cases where a child is placed under the court’s supervision or on an informal adjustment. These fees are used to purchase services such as counseling, educational services, and other programs such as mediation and symbolic restitution (community service) in accordance with OCGA § 15-11-37.

Services

The following is a partial list of services provided by the Juvenile Court and its partnering community service providers:

- Crisis intervention and counseling
- Psychological assessment
- Home study and evaluation
- Probation
- Restitution and community service
- Resource coordination
- Informal adjustment, mediation, and other non-adjudicatory diversion services
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and guardian ad litem services
- Permanency planning in dependency cases
- Surveillance of high-risk offenders, including electronic monitoring
- Drug testing for children under the court's supervision
- Second Chance Court for designated felony offenders
- Functional Family Therapy
- Cognitive restructuring
- Multi-Systemic Therapy

The Juvenile Court is a founding member of the Clayton County System of Care and is heavily engaged in collaborative partnerships with a multitude of agency and community organization stakeholders. The court also pursues the Balanced and Restorative Justice Model of juvenile justice and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative model of juvenile justice reform.

Operational Budget for Fiscal Year 2014

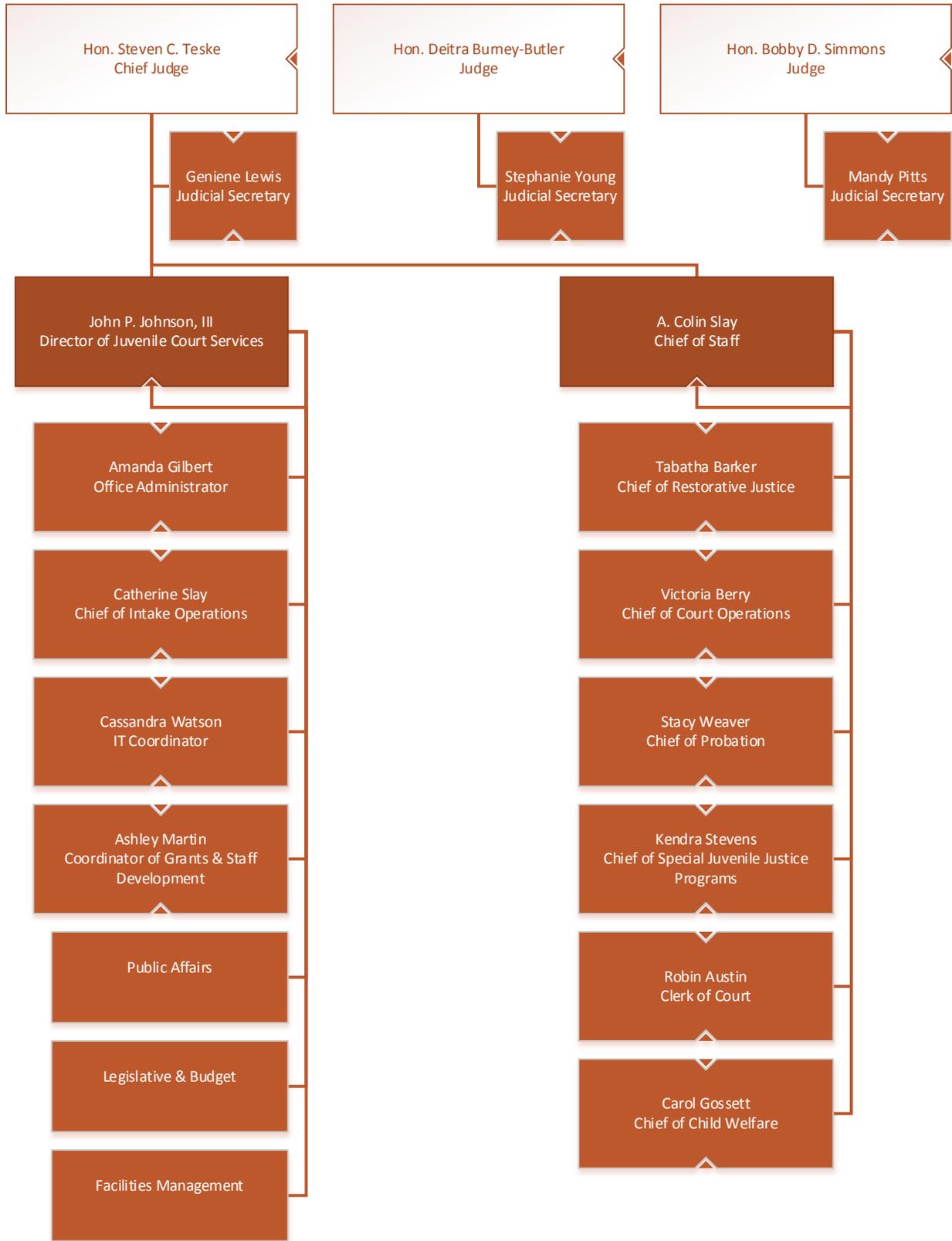
The Juvenile Court receives the vast majority of its funding from the Clayton County Board of Commissioners. More than half of that funding goes to support the salaries and benefits of the court's more than 70 full- and part-time employees. The remainder of the budget is devoted to supporting the court's operations and includes \$24,000 for direct services to the children that fall under the court's jurisdiction.

In addition to funding from the Board of Commissioners, the Juvenile Court also collects supervision fees from juveniles who are placed under informal and formal supervision of the court. The expenditure of these fees is limited by statute to providing assessments and evaluations; programs that are educational in nature; treatment services; and to support the supervision of youth under the court's supervision.

Finally, as in years past, the Juvenile Court was very successful in obtaining grants to support our work. Please see the Grants and Staff Development section of this report for more detailed information about the work of this unit.

The operational budget of the Juvenile Court for Fiscal Year 2014 remained relatively flat at \$4,101,300. The Juvenile Court collected \$13,589 in supervision fees and was awarded more than \$846,000 in grant funding.

Organizational Structure of the Juvenile Court



Judiciary

The Juvenile Court is served by three full-time judges, with the Honorable Steven C. Teske serving as the chief judge since July 2011. The Juvenile Court's judges are appointed by the Clayton County Superior Court to four-year terms.

The judges in Juvenile Court hear all cases that come under its jurisdiction that are formally processed. This includes the arraignment, adjudication and disposition hearings in matters of delinquency, in cases involving children in need of services, juvenile traffic offenses, and dependency matters. Detention hearings, to determine whether or not a child must remain in a detention facility pending further court action, are another responsibility of the judges. The judges of Juvenile Court are responsible for issuing all orders of the court as well as bench warrants, pick-up orders and ex parte orders involving children under its jurisdiction.

In Fiscal Year 2014, there were 3,174 court hearings in Juvenile Court involving delinquency, children in need of services, juvenile traffic offenses and dependency.

In addition to these types of cases, the Juvenile Court judges are called upon to hear a variety of special proceedings cases. These cases involve special circumstances such as permission to marry, extensions of custody, waiver of parental notification of abortion, expungement of a person's name from the state child abuse registry, and termination of parental rights. Juvenile Court judges may also serve as Superior Court judges when designated to do so.

Of the special proceedings, perhaps one of the most extreme is the termination of parental rights. These highly emotional and sensitive cases involve the severance of any and all relationship between a parent and child, opening the door to possible adoption of the child.

During Fiscal Year 2014, there were 18 termination of parental rights cases filed in the Juvenile Court. Of those, 8 resulted in the severance of the parents' rights.

Chief Judge Steven C. Teske

The Honorable Steven C. Teske was appointed associate judge to the Juvenile Court in July 1999, and was appointed judge in July 2003. With the retirement of the Honorable K. Van Banke in July 2011, Judge Teske was appointed Chief Judge of Clayton County Juvenile Court. While on the bench, he has received the Scales of Justice Award from the National Association of Legal Professionals for "conduct that exemplifies the hallmark of professionalism and ethical standards and inspires public confidence in the legal system;" the Judge Romae T. Powell Award from the Juvenile Court Association of Georgia; the Community Service Award from the Clayton County Chapter of the NAACP; the Atlanta Journal and Constitution Hero of Open Government Award; and the International Humanitarian Hero Award by the World Chamber of Commerce. Judge Teske has also received numerous other recognitions for his contributions to reforming the juvenile justice systems of not only Georgia, but also other states across the nation.

Judge Teske has served as the President of the Georgia Council of Juvenile Court Judges. He is a trustee for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. He has been appointed by the governor to serve on the Children and Youth Coordinating Council; Commission on Family Violence; Judiciary Advisory Council for the Department of Juvenile Justice; the Governor's Office for Children and Families; the Special Council of Criminal Justice Reform; and the Federal Advisory Committee for Juvenile Justice.

Judge Teske has written articles calling for reform in juvenile justice and child welfare that have been published in *Juvenile & Family Court Journal*, the *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*; *Juvenile & Family Justice Today*, and the *Georgia Bar Journal*, among others. He is a regular contributor to the online juvenile justice magazine, the *Juvenile Justice Information Exchange*. He has testified before several state legislatures and Congress on matters involving juvenile justice reform.

Judge Deitra Burney-Butler

The Honorable Deitra Burney-Butler was appointed to the Juvenile Court bench in January 2009. Prior to being appointed, Judge Burney-Butler practiced law for several years in private practice, primarily focusing on criminal defense, family law, and juvenile law. Judge Burney-Butler also served as both an assistant district attorney with the Clayton County District Attorney's Office and as an assistant solicitor with the Clayton County Solicitor's Office.

Judge Burney-Butler currently serves as the lead judge for the Clayton County Juvenile Court Dependency Practices and Innovations committee, where she has been instrumental in automating many of the systems, documents, and orders pertaining to dependency matters. In conjunction with this work, Judge Burney-Butler serves as the lead judge in the Georgia Council of Juvenile Court Judges' Dependency Court Improvement Initiative for Clayton County. Judge Burney-Butler recently completed the Advanced Child Abuse and Neglect Institute as part of its inaugural class. Additionally, Judge Burney-Butler also participated in the Complex Trauma Summit at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

Judge Burney-Butler had the honor of presenting at the Georgia Child Welfare Legal Academy forum on "Exploring a Year of Openness in Child Welfare: Open Courts." Additionally, Judge Burney-Butler had the opportunity to participate as a speaker at the Center of Hope Back to School Block Party, the 2014 Clayton County Faith-Based Summit, and a Clayton County Pretrial Diversion Intervention Program graduation ceremony. She also facilitated a three-part webinar entitled, "The Impact of Early Education: Baby Brains 0-3."

Judge Burney-Butler is a 1994 graduate of the University of Denver's College of Law and is a member of both the Georgia and Colorado Bar Associations. Judge Burney-Butler is a member of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, where she serves on the Diversion Committee; the Georgia Council of Juvenile Court Judges, where she serves on the Dependency Improvement Initiative and Permanency committees; and the American Bar Association's Judicial Division, where she serves on the Judicial Ethics Committee. Judge Burney-Butler is a member of the Atlanta Bar Association, where she is a member of the Women in the Profession and Litigation sections. She is also a member of the National Association of Women Judges and the Gate City Bar Association Judicial Section. Judge Burney-Butler is also a member of the Clayton County Coalition Against Violence and the Clayton County Prison Re-Entry Reform Task Force.

Judge Burney-Butler is the mother of one son and is involved in various capacities in many school and sports activities. Judge Burney-Butler is a member of a local church in addition to many other community, charitable, and religious organizations.

Judge Bobby D. Simmons

The Honorable Bobby D. Simmons was appointed as a judge to the Juvenile Court in July 2011. Prior to his appointment to the Juvenile Court he served as the Presiding Judge of the Magistrate Court of Clayton County since June 2006, and prior to that as a part-time municipal judge of Forest Park, Georgia.

Judge Simmons is a 1986 graduate of the Mississippi College of Law, with a doctorate of jurisprudence. He was sworn into the Georgia Bar in June 1986. He is a 1979 graduate of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, with a bachelor of sciences degree in radiologic technology, where he minored in business administration and computer sciences. Additionally, he is 1974 graduate of the University of Arkansas Medical Center's College of Health Related Professions in radiologic technology.

Judge Simmons' entire life has been about service to his fellow man, whether as a technologist, radiology department manager, lawyer, judge, Sunday School teacher, deacon, or Gideon Board Member. Judge Simmons is a member of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the Georgia Council of Juvenile Court Judges, where he serves on the Bench Book Committee, Technology Committee, and Court Improvement Initiative Committee. He is a member of the Clayton County Bar Association, having served as president for the 2011-2012 term, and he has served as an officer in all other capacities. He is a faithful member of the First Baptist Church of Jonesboro, where he serves as a deacon, Choir and Praise Team member, Sunday School teacher, and Faith Team member, as well as a representative to Gideons International, serving as vice president of the Fayetteville East Camp. He is also a member of the Board of Clayton County Community Services Authority. Judge Simmons believes, "ignorance is simply not knowing; stupidity is having the opportunity to 'know' and refusing to take it."

Court Administration

The administrative functions of the Juvenile Court are overseen by the Director of Juvenile Court Services, John P. Johnson, III. With more than 20 years of service to the Juvenile Court, Mr. Johnson oversees the administrative functions of the Juvenile Court, facilities management, grants and training, information technology, policy review, public affairs, the legislative, and budget affairs of the Juvenile Court. Mr. Johnson is also actively involved with the Juvenile Court Association of Georgia (JCAG) and the Georgia Council of Court Administrators (GCCA), where he has earned master's level certification in court administration. Mr. Johnson serves on the board of both JCAG and GCCA, as well as the Clayton County Collaborative Authority. Mr. Johnson is one of the principal members of the Board of Governor's for the Clayton County Juvenile Justice Fund.

The operational functions of the Juvenile Court are administered by the Chief of Staff, Colin Slay. Mr. Slay has served with the Juvenile Court since 1998, and is responsible for overseeing the Restorative Justice, Probation, and Child Welfare Divisions of the Juvenile Court, as well as the Office of the Clerk of Juvenile Court. Mr. Slay is a member of the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, Georgia Council of Court Administrators and National Association for Court Managers. Mr. Slay has achieved master's level certification in court administration from GCCA. Mr. Slay is also a 2011 graduate of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Applied Leadership Network and has been heavily involved in juvenile justice reform efforts across the state of Georgia as well as nationally. Mr. Slay serves on the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council's Disproportionate Minority Contact Subcommittee, the Clayton County Coalition against Violence, is a co-chair for the AECF Applied Leadership Network, and is a principal member of the Board of Governors for the Clayton County Juvenile Justice Fund.

Grants and Staff Development

Grant writing and staff training fall under the responsibility of our Grants and Staff Development Coordinator, Ashley Martin. In addition to researching and writing proposals for grants in support of our programs, Mrs. Martin also manages grant awards by compiling statistical and fiscal reports and coordinating the grant activities with our internal staff and collaborative partners.

In Fiscal Year 2014, the Juvenile Court applied for 8 grants, with a total potential award of \$1,003,778. Of those, 5 were awarded, totaling \$846,000.03 in revenue to support Family Functional Therapy for high-risk probationers, volunteer services for our Court Appointed Special Advocates program, cognitive behavioral therapy for children involved in our Second Chance Court program for high-risk designated felons, and support for the further development of the Clayton County System of Care.

Mrs. Martin is also responsible for developing, organizing, and coordinating training and development opportunities for Juvenile Court staff, including orientation training for new employees. The training comes in a number of formats, including free web-based seminars, review of emerging juvenile justice research, on-site classes, and coordination with partners such as Riverwoods Behavioral Health, who provides professional development opportunities for our staff and others in our collaborative. Many Juvenile Court staff are members of the Juvenile Court Association of Georgia and attend its annual conference, which offers two-and-a-half days of seminars and other educational opportunities.

For Fiscal Year 2014, Juvenile Court staff participated in 4 formal training opportunities and had the opportunity to participate in more than 20 self-study staff development and webinar opportunities.

Office of the Clerk of Juvenile Court

The Clerk of Juvenile Court, Robin Austin, oversees a staff consisting of the Assistant Clerk, Debbie Stinson, the Juvenile Court's receptionist, and ten deputy clerks who perform a wide variety of important duties. The Clerk has the responsibility for the maintenance of all juvenile records. All cases coming before the Juvenile Court are processed through the Clerk's Office and files are forwarded to the appropriate divisions.

The Clerk's Office is responsible for recording all traffic citations, complaints, petitions, motions, and orders filed in the Juvenile Court. The tasks of typing delinquent and CHINS petitions, assigning court-appointed attorneys, scheduling hearings, issuing summons, notifying parties, scheduling interpreters, preparing court dockets, and

recording cases dispositions are also the responsibilities of the Clerk's Office. Deputy clerks also attend all court hearings and make a record of the proceedings.

In Fiscal Year 2014, 2,688 complaints were filed with the Clerk's Office, and the office processed 1,539 petitions, scheduled 3,592 hearings, and entered 6,330 case dispositions¹.

The Clerk is responsible for the receipt and disbursement of monies for all court-ordered payments. These payments include restitution, child support, traffic fines, attorneys' fees, publication fees, copy fees, and supervision fees. The table below lists the monies collected and disbursed by the Juvenile Court in Fiscal Year 2014. Please note that amounts disbursed may not equal amounts collected. This occurs because some funds collected during the prior fiscal year were not paid out during the same fiscal year. Fees for publication are not disbursed until the completion of the publication and the invoices are received. Copy fees are disbursed at the close of the fiscal year.

TYPE	COLLECTED	DISBURSED
Publication	\$1,285.00	\$765.00
Restitution	\$5,802.03	\$5,809.42
Supervision fees	\$13,589.00	\$13,849.00
Traffic fines	\$6,155.41	\$5,947.31
Copy fees	\$947.00	\$275.50
Totals	\$27,778.44	\$26,646.23

The Clerk's Office prepares records when cases are transferred to another court and prepares transcripts for appeals as required. The confidentiality of the court's records is maintained through the Clerk's Office. The office is responsible for controlling access to and the sealing of records in compliance with the Juvenile Court's policies and Article 9 of the Juvenile Code of Georgia.

Intake Operations

Intake Operations is responsible for receiving referrals (complaints) from law enforcement officers, parents, school officials, and private citizens on children alleged to be delinquent, in need of services, and dependent, or who have been cited for traffic violations. Intake Operations is led by the Chief of Intake Operations, Catherine Slay. She manages a staff of three full-time intake officers, two part-time intake officers, and an intake assistant. Court officers assigned to other units also serve in an on-call intake capacity during nights, weekends, and on holidays when Intake Operations is not staffed.

Delinquency Case Processing

When a private citizen files a complaint alleging that a child is delinquent as defined in OCGA § 15-11-2, the intake officer reviews the facts to determine if the Juvenile Court has jurisdiction, if there is probable cause, and if so, the most prudent course of action for the processing of the complaint. If the intake officer determines that formal processing is required, the case is sent to the assistant district attorney assigned to Juvenile Court for investigation. Children are generally not detained on private citizen complaints.

¹ More than one complaint and disposition per juvenile may have been filed in the previous fiscal year.

In Fiscal Year 2014, Intake Operations received 1,441 complaints alleging delinquency.

When a child is charged with a delinquent act by police, the police officer is responsible for investigating the complaint. When a child is charged by the police, the intake officer assesses the child's risk for reoffending using the Detention Assessment Instrument (DAI), an objective detention risk classification tool developed by the Department of Juvenile Justice, to determine the need for detention pending an initial appearance before a judge. Detention decisions are driven by the DAI, and it can only be overridden if there are significant mitigating or aggravating factors present that are not taken into account by the DAI.

In Fiscal Year 2014, Intake Operations made 687 detention decisions; of those, intake officers detained 214 youth; the DAI Override Rate was 8%.

Not all cases are formally processed, however; under OCGA § 15-11-515, an intake officer may divert cases to informal processes such as mediation, counseling, and informal adjustments rather than routing the case to court for formal processing if counsel and advice without an adjudication would be in the best interests of the public and child.

Children in Need of Services (CHINS)

Complaints alleging that a child is in need of services are handled differently by Intake Operations. Beginning in January 2014, Georgia law separated status offenses from the delinquency code, creating a separate governance structure for CHINS. Article 5 of the *Juvenile Code of Georgia* acknowledges that certain behaviors or conditions that occur within a family or school environment indicate that a child is experiencing serious difficulties, and inasmuch, it requires a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing these issues. If a family or school is unable to effectively address inappropriate behaviors of a child on their own, the intake officer will refer the matter to the Clayton County Collaborative Child Study Team (Quad-C ST). The Quad-C ST is a panel made up of representatives from various child- and family-service organizations in Clayton County, and its purpose is to review the presenting issues and assist families in developing a plan to address them. Only after the Quad-C ST case plan has been proven ineffective may a CHINS case be processed in a formal sense through the Juvenile Court.

Intake Operations received a total of 160 CHINS and unruly complaints in Fiscal Year 2014.²

Dependency Case Processing

In addition to handling delinquency and CHINS matters, Intake Operations also receives all complaints involving matters of dependency (formally known as *deprivation*). Article 3 of the *Juvenile Code of Georgia* governs dependency proceedings, and its purpose is to assist and protect children whose physical or mental health and

² Prior to January 1, 2014, complaints consisting of status offenses were referred to as "Unruly" complaints. While the terminology changed with the implementation of the revised Juvenile Code, our process for handling these cases was essentially the same.

welfare is substantially at risk of harm from abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Complaints involving dependency generally come from three sources: the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), law enforcement, and private citizens.

In Fiscal Year 2014, Intake Operations received 841 complaints involving dependency.

DFCS is most often the complainant in dependency matters. The intake officer facilitates the processing of the complaints from DFCS and plays an approval and coordinating role in efforts made by the agencies involved in the placement of a child into shelter care or with a relative. The intake officer schedules these cases for their first appearance before a judge, which by law, must occur within 72 hours of the removal of the child from his or her parents or legal custodians.

If a police officer encounters a situation in which there is probable cause to believe a child is in danger from his or her immediate surroundings, the officer may take the child into protective custody and deliver him or her to the Juvenile Court. If the intake officer determines the Juvenile Court has jurisdiction and that protective custody is required, DFCS will investigate placement of the child. If there is no appropriate relative, the child will be placed in shelter care with DFCS pending court action. These cases are also scheduled for an initial appearance before a judge within 72 hours of the removal by the intake officer.

Allegations involving abuse and neglect may also be made by a private citizen or family member. Generally, after determining jurisdiction, an intake officer will refer these "third-party" complaints to DFCS or a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for investigation. The intake officer has the authority to issue a shelter care order if the circumstances warrant immediate removal of the child. In many cases, if the investigation finds there is probable cause to proceed, the intake officer will file a petition on behalf of the complainant, and the matter is scheduled for a hearing before a judge. In instances where the whereabouts of the child's parents are unknown, the complainant is required to pay a publication fee before a petition will be filed.

Restorative Justice Division

The Restorative Justice Division is an important facet of the Juvenile Court. Research indicates that juveniles who commit minor offenses are most often better served and have better outcomes from informal processing when compared to minor offenders placed into the formal juvenile justice system. Further, delinquent juveniles who are detained are far more likely to reoffend than their peers who are not detained. In their report, No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration, the Annie E. Casey Foundation cites multiple studies documenting the dangers associated with using detention, particularly when there are more effective, less costly alternatives available.

The Restorative Justice Division is led by Chief of Restorative Justice, Tabatha Barker. She is assisted in her responsibilities by the Mediation Coordinator, Dierdre Fluker, and Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative Coordinator, Shannon Howard. The division is staffed by five full-time court officers, one part-time court officer, and two part-time program assistants.

Diversion and Informal Adjustments

Informal adjustments and diversion programs are authorized by OCGA § 15-11-515, and are appropriate for complaints filed by law enforcement or other individuals in which the juvenile is alleged to have committed a delinquent act that is not of a serious nature or is alleged to be a child in need of services and where the juvenile appears amenable to informal handling.

Program data for Fiscal Year 2014 indicates that 699 cases were screened for informal processes and 289 informal contracts were monitored for a period of 90-180 days.

Diversion and Informal Adjustment Screening Process

Complaints involving delinquency and children in need of services (CHINS) referred to the Restorative Justice Division are screened towards first seeking an informal adjustment of the matter where it is in the best interest of the child and the community, using an objective Diversion Screening Assessment. The juvenile complaint is examined to determine if the child is eligible for diversion/informal adjustment or mediation and is based on the totality of the child's circumstances, which may include the child's age at the time of the offense; nature of the act; ability of the child's parents to correct and provide treatment for the child; resources available in the community to provide treatment; correction or discipline already provided by the parents or school system; and the child's level of remorse and the parents' understanding of the child's need for correction, among other factors. After considering these circumstances, the court officer may recommend dismissal, refer the child/family to another agency for services, informally adjust the case, file a petition, or take other appropriate action as provided by the law.

Meeting the Criteria for Diversion

In order to qualify for an informal adjustment, the following criteria must exist: the admitted facts must bring the child within the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court; it must be determined that counsel and advice without an adjudication would be in the best interest of the public and child; the child and child's parents or custodian must consent to the informal adjustment with knowledge that consent is not obligatory; and if the child is alleged to have committed a designated felony act as defined by OCGA § 15-11-2, the case shall not be subject to informal adjustment, counsel, or advice without the prior written notification of the assistant district attorney assigned to Juvenile Court.

Informal Adjustment Agreements

If it is determined that the child shall be placed on an informal adjustment agreement, the agreement will be monitored by a court officer for an initial period not to exceed three months; a judge may extend the agreement for an additional three months. The typical terms of informal adjustment agreements include: writing an apology letter, writing an educational essay or report, producing study logs, performing community service, participating in counseling, random drug screens, the child's and parents' participation in court programming, and payment of a supervision fee. Failure to comply with the agreement may result in the filing of a formal petition on the complaint.

Program Development and Services

Program services are coordinated by Court Officer Keshia Johnson. The Juvenile Court places an emphasis on utilizing programs and services that have demonstrated successful outcomes or have been proven by research to be effective at reducing recidivism. Often referred to as "promising practices" or "evidence-based practices" respectively, the Juvenile Court actively seeks community-based service providers who adhere to the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) Model Programs Guide or those services identified by crimesolutions.gov as effective. Youth who are on probation, as well as those who are monitored under informal adjustment agreements are referred to these programs by their supervising court officers. First-time offenders are sometimes given an opportunity to have their charge(s) dismissed by completing a workshop or program.

Most programs offered by the Juvenile Court or its community partners require parental participation, which empowers the parents to reinforce the information at home, thereby increasing the Juvenile Court's effectiveness with their children. Our programs require a referral from the child's assigned court officer, probation officer, school resource officer, or school administrator.

For more information about our programs or to inquire about becoming a preferred program provider, please contact Court Officer, Keshia Johnson, at 770.477-5964.

Outreach and Educational Programs

For up-to-date scheduling information for recurring Juvenile Court programs and events, please visit our Facebook page.

Project HIP

Project HIP (Handling It before Prison) is a collaborative effort between Hearts to Nourish Hope, the Riverdale Police Department, and the Juvenile Court. This program gives youth a true picture of prison and gang life as told by young adults and provides interactive panels for parents and teens with school personnel, law enforcement, and community service providers. It also offers opportunities for making community connections to resources that may be helpful for participants and their families. The program is generally held one Wednesday a month, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM, at Hearts to Nourish Hope on Highway 138 in Riverdale.

Conflict Resolution Workshop

Conflict Resolution is a workshop aimed at developing problem solving and conflict resolution strategies and skills, whether the conflict occurs in a classroom, at home, or results from an ongoing emotional issue. This program includes real-life simulation exercises that promote positive resolution of issues, working collaboratively to solicit responses and solutions, and teaches skills that can be applied in other settings through cognitive restructuring techniques. The workshop is held one Thursday a month from 6:30 to 8:00 PM, at the Clayton County Youth Development and Justice Center in Jonesboro.

Personal Space Workshop

The Personal Space Workshop is an eight-hour session that occurs on a Saturday, requiring youth and parents to participate in discussions that explore personal boundaries, effective communication, and making good choices. The workshop is scheduled based on referral need and is held at the Clayton County Youth Development and Justice Center in Jonesboro.

Choices

The Choices program is a collaborative effort of the Juvenile Court and Clayton County Public Schools. It meets for four consecutive evenings (Monday through Thursday) from 6:30 to 8:30 PM, and addresses making good choices and issues associated with the illicit use of drugs and alcohol.

Theft Prevention Workshop

The Theft Prevention Workshop is a collaborative effort of the Juvenile Court and Clayton County Extension Office. It requires youth and parents to participate in eight hours of discussions that explore the reasons for and the consequences associated with stealing as well as effective communication and making good choices. Scheduling is based on referral need.

Introduction to Juvenile Court

Introduction to Juvenile Court is a workshop designed to educate court-involved youth and their families with an overview of the policies, terminology, processes, and expectations of the Juvenile Court. The workshop is held one Tuesday a month, from 7:00 to 8:00 PM, at the Clayton County Youth Development and Justice Center in Jonesboro.

Baby Think it Over

Baby Think it Over is a program that focuses on court-involved teenagers that are sexually active and/or curious regarding sexual activity. The program teaches juveniles the consequences of having unprotected sex. The program also demonstrates what it is like to care for an infant through a weekend-long simulation with a lifelike baby simulator. Participants are required to attend a debriefing session on the Monday following the simulation. The program is scheduled based on referral need and is held at the Clayton County Youth Development and Justice Center in Jonesboro.

School Referral Reduction Program

Through a cooperative agreement with the Clayton County Public Schools and its police department, the School Referral Reduction Program (SRRP) allows school resource officers to refer students to workshops such as Conflict Resolution or mediation for certain minor delinquent offenses without filing a complaint with the Juvenile Court. The goal is to expose the students to information that can help them avoid further conflict without formal involvement with the juvenile justice system. In addition, school administrators can refer students to other workshops such as Project HIP and Choices as an alternative to out-of-school suspension.

The SRRP has been the source of much national attention for its innovative approach to dealing with school discipline issues and minor school offenses. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and other influential organizations have identified the Clayton County model as a promising approach to dismantling to what is commonly referred to as the “school to prison pipeline,” the result of zero-tolerance policies that push juveniles who commit minor school infractions into the juvenile justice system.³ A team that includes key staff from the Juvenile Court, Clayton County Public Schools, and Clayton County System of Care have provided technical assistance on the model to jurisdictions as diverse as Wichita, Kansas; Connecticut; Los Angeles; Kentucky; Denver; South Dakota; Florida; Alabama; South Carolina; Arkansas; Kentucky; and North Carolina, among others. This work is supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Clayton County Juvenile Justice Fund, Inc.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

ADR is a term that describes a number of processes used to resolve disputes as an alternative to formal processing of complaints. These informal processes include negotiation, conciliation, mediation, and arbitration. ADR processes provide a less formal, less adversarial, and less expensive method of addressing disputes, and research shows that participants are often more satisfied with the experience than those whose cases are formally processed.⁴ Courts have increasingly utilized these methods as tools to alleviate crowded court calendars and to produce more meaningful results.

In the fall of 1986, the Juvenile Court implemented its first mediation program. This action was taken to supplement the Juvenile Court’s existing restitution effort. That program evolved into our current ADR program that extends beyond traditional mediation to include several programs. In addition to the Juvenile Court staff in the Restorative Justice Division that are assigned to ADR, the Juvenile Court contracts with several mediators who are selected from the community with various backgrounds. All are registered neutrals with the Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution and have completed a juvenile mediation training curriculum. ADR’s goal is to assist youth in successfully closing their cases while providing education about the law and promoting accountability for the offender and restoration to the victim.

³ Clayton County’s School Referral Reduction Program has been featured in the work of the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative; the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation’s Models for Change initiative; the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Forward Promise initiative; and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges has developed a practice guide for the replication of Clayton County’s model.

⁴ Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, v62, pp. 124-29, Feb. 1994.

In Fiscal Year 2014, there were 247 cases assigned to ADR for screening and of those, 196 youth were monitored for a period of 90 to 180 days under a mediated informal agreement.

What is Mediation?

Mediation is an informal process in which the parties involved are empowered to resolve their own differences with the assistance of a neutral third party, the mediator. Mediation is a voluntary process as the parties agree to work together to resolve their differences. The parties may solicit legal representation, but is neither necessary nor mandatory in this setting. The main focus of mediation is not to prove guilt or innocence, but rather to address the charge, identify the conflict, clear up any misunderstandings, and attain a resolution that is workable for all parties. Furthermore, mediation creates a forum of accountability and provides the respondents with an educational awareness about the law as it relates to juveniles. Mediation can open the door to bridging and nurturing broken relationships while creating new alliances.

The Mediation Process

Complaints received by the Juvenile Court are first screened by Intake Operations. Those that are deemed appropriate for mediation are forwarded to ADR for further review. In most instances, the cases involve property damage, loss of property, school, or family issues. ADR also occasionally mediates dependency matters as directed by a judge, particularly those involving disputes about custody of children. Once a case has been identified as appropriate for mediation, the victim is contacted and invited to seek a mediated solution. If the victim agrees, a mediation hearing is scheduled.

The goal of each session is to produce an agreement that is acceptable to all parties. During the mediation hearing the juvenile is encouraged to be accountable for his or her actions. Secondly, the objective is for the juvenile to gain a perspective that will assist in altering his or her thought process, thus preventing him or her from reoffending. The juvenile and victim also participate in a "brainstorming" process facilitated by the mediator to determine possible resolutions. In many cases the agreement will consist of restitution to the victim and participation of the youth in a workshop or other program to help address his or her underlying behavior. Failure to comply with the mediation agreement may result in the matter being set for a formal hearing before a judge.

The mediation program has successfully addressed shoplifting cases involving merchants in the community and property damage cases involving private citizens. Additionally, the program has been effective in handling school-related conflicts prior to the student receiving a formal charge, as part of the Clayton County System of Care and the School Referral Reduction Program.

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)

JDAI is a two-decade old project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF). According to AECF, "JDAI is one of the nation's most effective, influential, and widespread juvenile justice reform initiatives." JDAI is primarily focused on the use of detention by the juvenile justice system; over the past three decades, a large body of research has documented the dangers of using detention inappropriately. AECF contends that "youth are often unnecessarily or inappropriately detained at great expense, with long-lasting negative consequences for both public safety and youth development."⁵ For more information, please visit the JDAI Help Desk (www.jdaihelpdesk.org).

⁵ In their report, [No Place for Kids: Reducing Juvenile Incarceration](#), the Annie E. Casey Foundation cites multiple studies documenting the dangers associated with using detention, particularly when there are more effective, less costly alternatives available.

Clayton County became a JDAI replication site in 2003, as a response to tremendous stress on our juvenile justice system. Extremely high referral rates, primarily the result of minor school offenses, led to all-time high probation caseloads and recidivism rates. Graduation rates were also at an all-time low in Clayton County. Since 2002, our JDAI programs have had a profound impact on outcomes for youth involved with the Juvenile Court.

The average daily population in detention has decreased by 80%, and the average daily population for youth of color has decreased by 75%. The average length of stay for juveniles who are detained has fallen by 47%. The commitment rate for all youth has dropped by more than 70%, and the commitment rate for youth of color has fallen by 66%. Less than 1% of juveniles released on alternatives to detention are re-arrested before their disposition. Juvenile petition filings have decreased by 72% since 2002.⁶

JDAI Coordinator, Shannon Howard, manages two of the most important JDAI programs in Clayton County, the award-winning Finding Alternatives for Safety and Treatment (FAST) Panel and the Clayton County Collaborative Child Study Team (Quad-C ST).⁷

FAST Panel

The FAST Panel is a multi-disciplinary detention review committee that meets every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to review the cases of children who have been detained by Intake Operations. The objective of the panel is to identify resources that might enable the child to be safely released from detention pending the final disposition of the youth's case. The committee is comprised of trained community volunteers, community-based service providers, probation officers, and agency representatives from our collaborative partners. For more information on becoming a FAST Panel volunteer, please contact the JDAI Coordinator, Shannon Howard, at 770.472-8138.

Quad-C ST

The Quad-C ST is another multi-disciplinary panel composed of community-based service providers and the agency representatives of our collaborative partners that serves as a single point-of-entry for access to available resources. Partnering with Clayton County Public Schools, the Quad-C ST serves as the primary review committee for the Clayton County System of Care, staffing the cases of students exhibiting at-risk behaviors, with the goal of providing services that might prevent the student from becoming formally involved with the juvenile justice system.

⁶ This data is provided by Canyon Solutions of Phoenix, Arizona and was reported in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's [2013 JDAI Annual Results Report](#).

⁷ Clayton County Juvenile Court's FAST Panel was awarded the American Probation and Parole Association's President's Award in 2006.

Probation Division

The Probation Division of the Juvenile Court is divided into three functional units: Court Operations, Field Operations, and Special Juvenile Justice Programs.

Court Operations

The Court Operations Unit is headed by Chief of Court Operations, Victoria Berry, and consists of three court officers. The unit's primary function is conducting pre-disposition investigations and preparing social history reports for the disposition of delinquency cases that have come before the Juvenile Court for formal processing. In addition to investigating and writing reports, the court officers assigned to Court Operations also supervise youth who have been placed on Community Detention Orders as an alternative to detention pending the final disposition of their cases.

During Fiscal Year 2014, the Court Operations Unit had 310 cases assigned to its members.

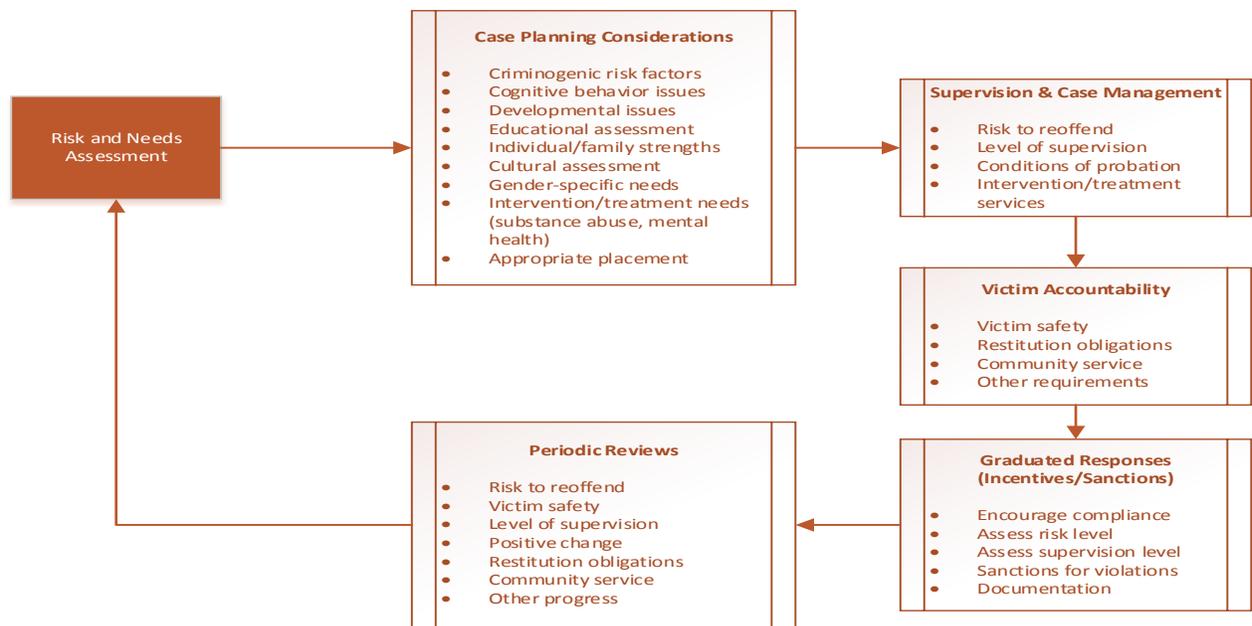
Field Operations

The Field Operations Unit is led by Chief of Probation, Stacy Weaver, who supervises eight field officers. Field officers conduct risk classifications and needs assessment and write individualized treatment plans for all youth placed on an order of probation using the Juvenile Assessment and Risk Instrument System (JARIS). Field officers also provide ongoing supervision to those youth placed on probation by the Juvenile Court.

Field officers use a system of graduated responses to ensure compliance with court-ordered conditions and treatment plan goals. Sanctions range from verbal warnings to formal violations of probation that may result in the child being placed into detention. Sanctions are based on the severity, nature, and frequency of the violation, relative to the probationer's risk based on his or her JARIS risk classification. If it is determined that all appropriate community-based options have been exhausted, the field officer may recommend that the child be committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), if the child presents a risk to the community and meet the statutory requirements for commitment. Commitment to DJJ is generally considered an option of last resort.

In Fiscal Year 2014, 2,504 counts involving delinquency or CHINS were filed against 1,601 children, and only 26 juveniles were committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice.

In addition to monitoring compliance, field officers coordinate rehabilitative and treatment services for probationers and their families. These services are based on the needs identified by the child's JARIS Needs Assessment. Field officer evaluates the juvenile's progress toward achieving probation goals and recommends termination of probation at the appropriate time. The figure below illustrates the case planning process.



In Fiscal Year 2014, 256 juveniles were assigned to Field Operations; the average probation caseload was 10, consisting mostly of moderate- and high-risk offenders. Field officers initiated 3,511 face-to-face contacts with these children, most of which occurred in the juvenile’s community. Field officer also participated in 8,676 collateral contacts, which consist of an array of educational, community service, treatment, and family interactions.

Special Juvenile Justice Programs

The Special Juvenile Justice Programs Unit was created this year in an effort to provide oversight and to help manage some of the Juvenile Court’s unique programs that are specific to what is commonly referred to as the “deep end” of the juvenile justice spectrum. The unit is led by Chief of Special Juvenile Justice Programs, Kendra Stevens, and is staffed by two full-time probation officers, one part-time surveillance officer, and one part-time transportation aide.

Second Chance Court

The Second Chance Court is an alternative to incarceration for high-risk designated felony offenders. Participants and their parents have to agree to the terms of the program and adherence is closely monitored by two probation officers. Participants undergo routine substance abuse screening, are electronically monitored, and

participate in Cognitive Behavioral Restructuring therapy and family counseling. The program is based on the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's accountability court framework, and there are heavy penalties for failure, which include incarceration of up to five years in a juvenile prison. The Second Chance Court program is a collaborative effort between the Juvenile Court and Grace Harbour and is largely supported through Juvenile Accountability Block Grant funding from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

Functional Family Therapy

The 2013 Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant program from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council was designed to use community-based interventions to reduce reliance on commitments to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The community-based interventions are limited to those considered to be evidence-based programs, one of which is Functional Family Therapy (FFT). Probationers and their families participating in FFT engage with clinical therapists over a three-to-five month period in an effort to produce positive behavioral changes. FFT consists of five major components: engagement, motivation, relational assessment, behavior change, and generalization, to attain necessary goals. The Juvenile Court partners with Southwest Key Programs to implement FFT, and last year, they helped us beat our goal of reduced commitments by more than 50%.

Child Welfare Division

The Child Welfare Division of the Juvenile Court is headed by Chief of Child Welfare, Carol Gossett. She is assisted in her duties by Citizen Review Panel Coordinator, Concilia Chillumuna. The division is staffed by six CASA volunteer supervisors, a CASA training supervisor, and a Citizen Review Panel assistant.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

The Clayton County CASA program provides essential, high-quality advocacy, intervention, and support to children who have been the victims of abuse and neglect in Clayton County, who are foster care, the care and custody of relatives, or are involved in custody dispute cases.

Statistical evidence shows that as numbers of substantiated child abuse and neglect cases rise, so does the need for effective intervention and expansion of current program capability.⁸ CASA programs represent a well-documented and nationally recognized response to this growing need. CASA volunteers, serving as the child's own special advocate or Guardian ad Litem, develop relationships with assigned children and families, enabling them to be a powerful voice and presence throughout the Juvenile Court and Superior Court processes.

In Fiscal Year 2014, 79 CASA Volunteers advocated for more than 102 foster children and CASA staff advocated for 1,473 children. CASA staff logged approximately 1,349 hours in the courtroom, and CASA Volunteers logged more than 7,412 hours advocating for children.

Trained CASA volunteers, working in concert with the Juvenile Court, and through a memorandum of understanding, the Superior Court, the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), and others from the community, provide support services and bring relevant information, resources, and recommendations to the

⁸ National CASA: www.casaforchildren.org

courts in the best interest of the children they serve. Clayton County CASA is also affiliated with National CASA, Georgia CASA, and Metro Atlanta CASA. For more information on becoming a volunteer with the Clayton County CASA program, please contact CASA Training Supervisor, Becky Galbreath, at 678.610-1061.

During Fiscal Year 2014, Clayton County CASA took in \$7,867.39 in Guardian ad Litem fees from Superior Court custody investigations.

Clayton County CASA's Affiliated Volunteer Opportunities

Friends of Clayton County CASA

Friends of Clayton County CASA is an advisory board that supports the Clayton County CASA program by increasing public awareness, recruiting and supporting volunteers, and identifying individual and community resources to help fund and support the program.

Ambassadors Behind CASA (ABCs)

Ambassadors behind CASA is a membership organization of volunteers whose purpose is to provide service to the Clayton County CASA program, as a partner to the Friends of Clayton County CASA, through public awareness of CASA, developing and implementing fundraising initiatives, and sponsoring activities for the children advocated for by Clayton County CASA.

Judicial Citizen Review Panels

The Judicial Citizen Review Panel (JCRP) is a program of the Georgia Council of Juvenile Court Judges. Its purpose is to assist judges in determining the most appropriate permanency plan for children in foster care. Clayton County Juvenile Court started using JCRPs in 1986.

The JCRPs consist of a cross-section of volunteers from the community, who undergo two days of specialized training from the Council of Juvenile Court Judges to acquaint them with the process of foster care review. Upon completion of the training, the volunteers are sworn in as officers of the court, to act in the best interest of the child.

Panel volunteers (known as panel members), serve on one of nine panels, who meet one day a month to review cases of children placed in foster care by the Juvenile Court. The JCRP's ultimate task is to see that the children are in a permanent home as soon as safely possible. JCRP hearings are conducted with panel members meeting with the DFCS case workers, parents, the children, other family members, foster parents, service providers, and CASA to review the progress of the parent or custodian, to ensure compliance with the court-ordered case plan, and to make sure that all necessary services are being provided to the family, as well as monitoring the welfare of the children. Panel members then make recommendations to the judge on what should happen next in the case. The judge has final authority in all matters that appear before the JCRP.

During Fiscal Year 2014, the Judicial Citizen Review Panels conducted 209 panels and volunteered 297.5 hours, helping to achieve permanency by closing 58 foster care cases either reunifying the

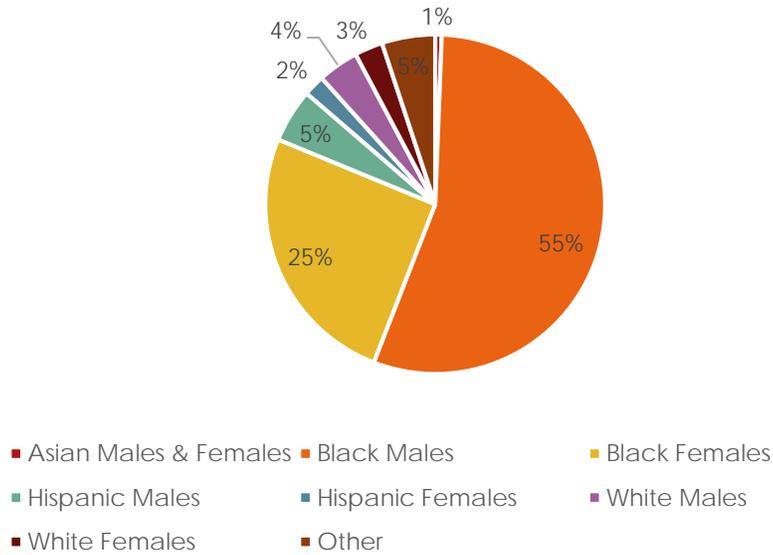
children with parents, relative placements,
adoption, or independent living.

For more information about the Judicial Citizen Review Panel program or to volunteer, please call Judicial Citizen Review Panel Coordinator, Concilia Chillumuna, at 770.473-5961.

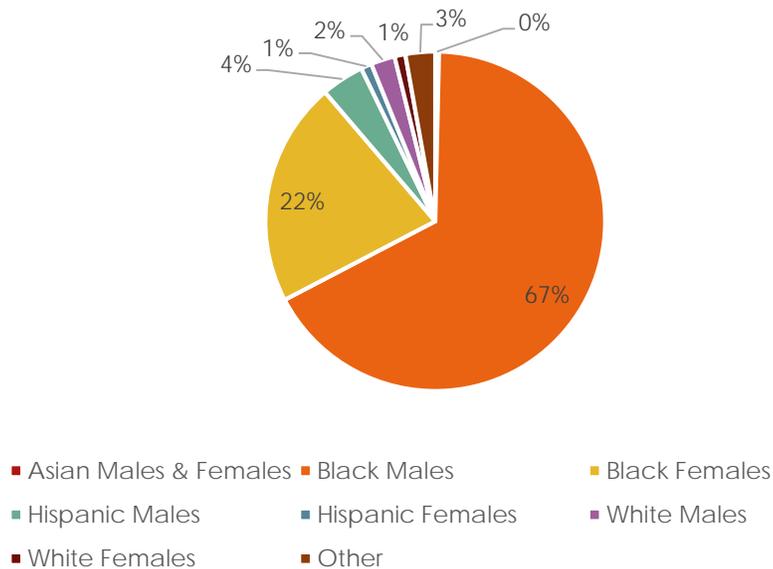
Statistical Reports for Fiscal Year 2014

The following charts provide a statistical depiction of the Juvenile Court's work during Fiscal Year 2014:

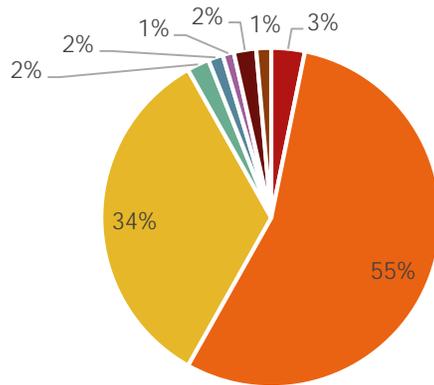
Total Filings, FY 2014: 3,728 Counts



Delinquent Filings, FY 2014: 2,231 Counts

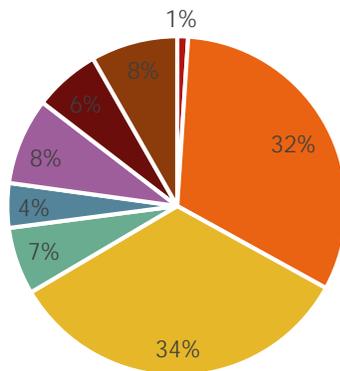


CHINS/Unruly Filings, FY 2014: 273 Counts



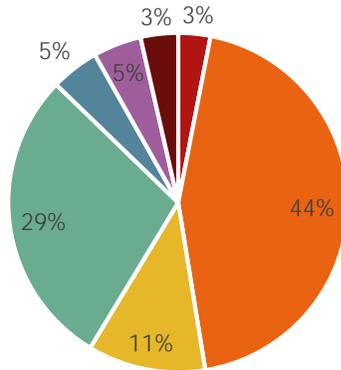
- Asian Males & Females
 Black Males
 Black Females
- Hispanic Males
 Hispanic Females
 White Males
- White Females
 Other

Dependency Filings, FY 2014: 850 Counts



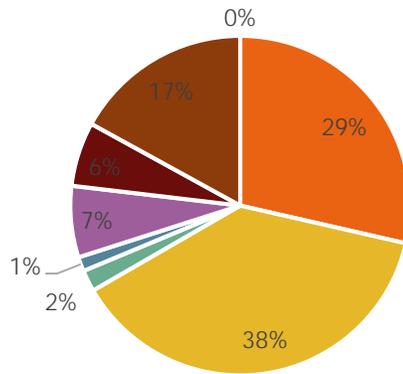
- Asian Males & Females
 Black Males
 Black Females
- Hispanic Males
 Hispanic Females
 White Males
- White Females
 Other

Traffic Filings, FY 2014: 227 Counts



- Asian Males & Females
- Black Males
- Black Females
- Hispanic Males
- Hispanic Females
- White Males
- White Females
- Other 31

Special Proceedings, FY 2014: 147 Counts



- Asian Males & Females
- Black Males
- Black Females
- Hispanic Males
- Hispanic Females
- White Males
- White Females
- Other