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Nevada District Court, Family Division Assessment Report

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This report was prepared by the National Center for Juvenile Justice, the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

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Executive Summary and Recommendations

On behalf of the Supreme Court of Nevada, the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ), the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), conducted an initial study to assess the status of the family division models operating the 2nd and 8th Judicial District Courts in Washoe and Clark counties (hereinafter referred to as Washoe County Family Division and Clark County Family Division). The study time frame was 8 months, beginning with data collection instrument planning and online document review in mid-January of 2019. The study's purpose is to identify the high-level areas in which the coordinated family division operating models for juvenile and family law are meeting legislative goals, to identify the primary challenges for meeting these goals, and to make recommendations.

The study methods were qualitative and started with NCJJ reviewing the enabling statutes creating Nevada's coordinated family division model, historical documents describing the goals of the reform, and state and local court rules that shape practice in both jurisdictions. The primary data collection activity for the study were three electronic surveys and six days of on-site interviews with judges and hearing masters (hereinafter referred to collectively as judicial officers) and a broad range of family law, child welfare, and juvenile justice stakeholders interacting with the family divisions on a regular basis (hereinafter referred to collectively as stakeholders). Specific stakeholder types included private attorneys, public defenders, prosecutors, family division administration, clerks of court, judicial support staff, and the directors of several agencies or units co-located within the respective courts or supervising staff who work in the courts daily (e.g., the Department of Juvenile Justice, Legal Aid Services). Legislators also were invited to participate by a brief electronic survey or in telephone interviews. To support the qualitative data collected for the study, the introduction provides a summary of 5-year workload trends by case type within the family divisions of Washoe and Clark counties and the results of a workload comparison of judicial officers assigned to hear family division case types in comparable jurisdictions. The study also addressed the ability of the respective family divisions to use their information technology resources to measure the likelihood of families in court having various types of past and pending cases within the family division (see Appendix C). The assessment was guided by a workgroup led by Justice James Hardesty and the presiding judges and family division administrators from Washoe and Clark counties.

During the planning for the study, it became clear that a framework for the operating principles and goals for family divisions was needed to help structure the electronic survey and on-site portions of the assessment. NCJJ reviewed examples used in other family court studies in California, Ohio, and

Maryland to help shape the design. The assessment tools and protocols developed under the framework were adapted by NCJJ to encompass family court goals in the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 3. These goals included: judicial specialization in juvenile and family law (NRS 3.0105 and 3.233 and 3.0125 and 3.0185); one-family--one-judge case coordination (NRS 3.025); resolution of certain disputes through nonadversarial methods; and, maximizing the use of alternative dispute resolution methods and programs (NRS 3.225). The goals/principles articulated in the NRS family division enabling statutes were further framed with measurable goals contained in the Performance Standards and Measures for Maryland's family divisions and the American Institutes for Research Unified Family Court Evaluation Literature Review (Babb and Kuhn, 2002; and Hirst, 2002). The assessment used this framework to organize data collection and summarize findings contained in this report.

The document review indicated that the enabling statutes creating the family divisions in Washoe and Clark counties have helped advance both jurisdictions to positions of strength nationally (as this study will describe). Both jurisdictions are growing in population. Between 1993 and 2018, the total population of Clark County grew 147% and Washoe County grew by 67% (see Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2018. Online). Clark County is similar to the family courts of the boroughs of New York City in operating this type of court administration model at a scale serving a population between 2-2.5 million people. There is a high level of ongoing communication between the Supreme Court Justices, the Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), and the respective judges and juvenile and family law attorneys in both jurisdictions, and a spirit of admiration and mutual collaboration between Washoe and Clark counties (as opposed to competition). The cycle of the annual judicial conference and quarterly local bench/bar gatherings are critical to this environment existing within Nevada. While finite resources for judicial officers and facility space are a challenge, the family divisions in Washoe and Clark counties have notable operating strengths, and judicial officers and stakeholders responding to the electronic survey expressed general satisfaction with the family division operations. The following findings are supported by the electronic survey and on-site interviews conducted for the assessment. Highlights of strengths include:

- Both courts frequently collaborate with justice partners to work on policies and procedures and address challenges.
- The judges vary in their community presence and leadership roles as advocates for justice for families in court. However, there are shining examples in both jurisdictions of judges who exercise strong judicial leadership in a manner well aligned with resolutions and model practices published by NCJFCJ.

- Both courts are extremely busy but have the caseload management capability to be able to understand their trends and make adjustments. This is a feature lacking in many other jurisdictions.
- Recent efforts to examine and improve operations for specific case types aligned with where the most stress was noted in child welfare, guardianship, and juvenile justice cases.
- Both courts are dedicated to the optimal use of technology to meet their operating goals to serve self-represented litigants and provide alternative dispute resolution (ADR) opportunities.
- The state has been an active partner in helping to explore new ADR techniques and most recently succeeded in evaluating and expanding ADR in child abuse/neglect cases.

The primary limitations of the Nevada family court model, based on electronic survey and on-site interview response, include:

- Due to population growth in both jurisdictions, the respective family division court facilities are in need of expansion and at risk of fragmenting with departments already being housed outside of the primary facilities.
- The facility challenge is impacting the ability of the court to manage the volatile dynamics of vulnerable family members in court seeking emergency protection from domestic violence, litigants involved in contentious custody matters, and children in court for abuse/neglect.
- There are differences in opinion concerning the most efficient use of hearing masters in a coordinated family division model in both Washoe and Clark counties and a need for additional training and support for them.
- There is an unmet need for public voice in family division operations. Juvenile and family law case types are personal and emotional and among the most volatile within court systems. The stakes for children and families in court are high and the decisions judicial officers make are life-altering. Both courts lack ongoing forums for children and families to provide feedback on their experiences in court.
- In both of the jurisdictions, when major changes are discussed and implemented, stakeholders impacted by the changes are not always included in the discussions.
- Judicial training (inclusive of hearing masters) is a challenge. The AOC works closely to meet this challenge but lacks a specialized judicial training department aligned with the challenges faced by Nevada's coordinated family division model.
- Regular and ongoing training for family division staff, clerks and security in both jurisdictions concerning the dynamics of domestic violence are challenging for the courts to address.

NCJJ respectfully proposes the following recommendations to the Supreme Court of Nevada and the respective family divisions in Washoe and Clark counties.

1. Sustain the family division operating model. Over 25 years after the Nevada Legislature implemented the family division legislation, there is strong support among judicial officers and stakeholders to continue the model. Both jurisdictions can present many specific examples for how they operate under these goals, albeit sometimes under stress and strain, but generally with a high level of commitment to service to the community and families in court. Regular and open communication, progressive technology, and strong county and community partner support have a central role in sustaining and advancing goals under Nevada's coordinated family division operating model. Specific features of both jurisdictions have promise for informing other state and local jurisdictions considering adopting a family division operating model in the future. The family divisions in Washoe and Clark counties are also informing each other in a collaborative manner and are pioneering and sharing solutions that may eventually be replicated. NCJJ repeatedly observed a spirit of friendly competition and mutual admiration between family division leaders and stakeholders in the jurisdictions.

2. Support careful planning for future court facility expansions. The primary threats to Nevada's coordinated family division operating model are tied to population growth and the respective Washoe and Clark counties' court facility footprints. The family division court facilities are prematurely aging from the pressure. In both jurisdictions, courtroom operations and ancillary family division services that were once co-located are now fragmenting to other locations. The separation is affecting family division morale and may contribute to an erosion of public trust, particularly for self-represented litigants that are incurring a greater level of stress in navigating separate locations. This stress has implications for the well-being concerns of children and vulnerable family members including; more time off of work, greater expense and general stress navigating the courts. Both jurisdictions are considering long-term options but the scale at which they operate, particularly in Clark County, provides formidable obstacles that inhibit or prevent efforts to alleviate these challenges. The Supreme Court of Nevada in collaboration with the legislature and the executive branch should undertake a court facility study, or provide support to both jurisdictions to independently engage in family division master planning. Planning activities require state support can involve projecting population with the best available accuracy and new case filing growth based on existing trends; addressing judicial officer and family division staffing deficits and estimating future need (see recommendation 3); and developing functional requirements for a facility footprint that will accommodate the family division and plan outward for growth. The development timeframe for this undertaking will require sustained support for several years and steadfast leadership from the Supreme Court and AOC.

3. Conduct weighted workload study for the family divisions. Both courts are crowded and busy and are emerging from a period of chronic caseload pressure. Caseload pressure has impacted their ability to meet high internal standards and those of ongoing state and local court improvement commissions and task forces. The normative workload comparisons contained in this study suggest that both courts are operating at a deficit of judicial officer resources in comparison to similar jurisdictions (see the Judicial Officer Resource Comparison section of this report). There is optimism about the recent state support to address these challenges with additional judicial positions effective in 2021, but the NCJJ workload comparisons indicate that even with this allocation, the family divisions in Washoe and Clark counties will continue operating at a deficit of judicial officer resources when compared to similar jurisdictions. The differences are substantial enough that NCJJ recommends that the Nevada Legislature allocate support for family division weighted workload studies in order to determine the magnitude of the judicial position deficit in both family divisions by case type. In the past, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) has worked with both of the courts to conduct this type of specialized research activity for the criminal and civil divisions (Ryan et al., 2005; Tallarico et al., 2007). NCSC has more recently conducted a study to weight workload values by case types heard in West Virginia’s family court system (see West Virginia Family Court Judges Workload Study <http://www.courtswv.gov/lower-courts/pdfs/FamilyCourtJudgeWorkloadStudy,FinalReport2014.pdf>). Weighted workload studies require careful planning, and in the instance of time studies, a commitment from each judicial officer within the study jurisdictions is required to record the time spent conducting a variety of activities on a daily basis and for an extended period of time (e.g., 9 weeks in the West Virginia example). However, there is ample justification to warrant the investment in a weighted approach, including: the uniqueness of Nevada’s coordinated family division model, the high internal performance standards that both courts have set for case processing and judicial oversight, the size and scale at which the family division in Clark County is operating, and the need to consider long-range planning for new court facilities that address current deficits and long-term projections for needs with population growth. An investment in weighted workload studies should be structured with a study deliverable to provide the Nevada AOC with the data collection tools required to update the time studies and case type weights themselves as needed in the future.

4. Create a hearing master study commission or task force. Hearing masters have an important role within both the family divisions serving Washoe and Clark counties. They help to balance the demand for elected judges to have a broad range of juvenile and family law knowledge with the need for high specialization in certain high-volume or highly technical case types such as child support or oversight in abuse/neglect cases. The hearing master system also reflects the shared investment of the state and the counties in supporting the operation of courts within an ever-changing environment. Quasi-judicial

officers are a feature of juvenile and family court operations in many states and were an influential factor in the normative workload comparisons conducted for this study (see the Judicial Officer Comparison section of this report). While there are many benefits of quasi-judicial officers to consider, a theme among interview participants was the challenge of including hearing masters in training and collaboration forums. The lack of coverage for their high-volume dockets was often cited as the reason for hearing masters not being available to attend training and forums. How to best deploy and support hearing masters is a stress point in the current Nevada family division model that the AOC should help to resolve by elevating the discussion of how to best support the hearing master resource and the possible need for statute or court rule reforms. At the request of the Clark County Family Division, and on an unrelated study, NCJFCJ has compiled initial information based on a quick scan of court rules in other states governing quasi-judicial officers and can be called upon to assist with providing expanded information to a study commission.

5. Establish an Office of Family Division Services within the AOC. The AOC, the respective juvenile and family bars, and Washoe and Clark counties communicate frequently and collaboratively to identify problems and solutions. Virtually every interview respondent referred to the importance of these well-organized forums in both jurisdictions. However, the breadth of family division jurisdiction in Nevada is wide-ranging, and the need for comparable specialization for state support within the AOC should mirror it in an office or position for family division services, or similar to Kentucky's Department of Family and Juvenile Services (see <https://kycourts.gov/aoc/familyjuvenile/Pages/default.aspx>) or the Supreme Court of Ohio's Office of Court Services, Children and Families Section, <https://www.sconet.state.oh.us/JCS/>). The purpose of this office is to help preserve and advance key family division operating goals in the NRS, such as supporting judicial specialization in juvenile and family law matters with state-of-the-art training, solutions to one-family-one-judge case assignment, optimal and domestic violence-informed use of nonadversarial dispute resolution, proactive caseload management tailored to the NRS provisions of each case type, and progressive use of technology. Increasing the AOC's specialized capacity to support family division operations will help the two jurisdictions achieve and sustain these important goals and take advantage of the proximity of the National Judicial College and NCJFCJ.

6. Support specialized, ongoing, domestic violence training. There currently is a critical need in both jurisdictions to train all staff on the dynamics of domestic violence and to implement model screening procedures. Training is needed not only for judges but also for hearing masters and anyone working directly with those whose cases may involve domestic violence. More than half of domestic violence incidents will not have been disclosed. Thus any court staff or court-related professionals interacting directly with litigants must be trained. This type of highly specialized, intensive and ongoing training

need is one of many examples that recommendation 5 is aimed at addressing and one that the NCJFCJ can help to support with technical assistance.

7. Consider expanding the District Court, Family Division’s assessment data collection to public forums and to judicial officers and stakeholders working in rural jurisdictions. The scope of this study was initially focused on the two urban district courts for which the NRS requires a coordinated family division model to be applied. During the study, NCJJ identified areas where investments in different or more detailed data collection are warranted. Two of the most important topics for further data collection are measuring public opinion about the family division model and addressing the model as it is applied in rural areas of the state. NCJJ’s findings can be used to develop a process to formally gather public opinion about the family division model through techniques such as polling and public hearings. In-person interviews with state and community policy-makers and leaders that were outside the scope of this initial study can be part of the methodology during this next phase. A goal of a phase two study should be to determine the communication pathways that are most effective for providing an ongoing client/family voice. For example, prior to developing this recommendation NCJJ reviewed all AOC websites from all 50 states and identified at least one state AOC that provides an informal complaint panel to address complaints or concerns about court operations. The informal complaint panel is specifically intended to constructively provide a forum for concerns before they rise to the level of a formal grievance (see, <https://www.ndcourts.gov/supreme-court/committees/informal-complaint-panel>). While this might be a solution worth considering, additional information needs to be collected in public gatherings and with planning methods that will encourage a strong response rate.

The subsequent phase should also measure the needs of rural jurisdictions to achieve objectives and expectations that are aligned with Nevada’s coordinated family division model (i.e., revisiting what the model is for a rural court and what implementation support may be required).

Introduction

During the mid-1980s, Nevada policy-makers began to consider the merits of various family court models (often referred to as Unified Family Courts or UFCs during that era, nationally, and hereinafter referred to as Nevada's coordinated family division model). Coordinated family divisions were first introduced as a distinct judicial operating model during the early 20th century as a judicial administration framework better suited to addressing the complex needs of families in court. Early judicial advocates of the model helped to popularize the concept and various family court models emerged in a handful of diverse jurisdictions across the nation, such as Toledo, OH; Des Moines, IA; St. Louis, MO; Omaha, NE; Portland, OR; and Baton Rouge, LA. The concept evolved and expanded during the 1950s, culminating in the publication of the *Standard Family Court Act* and the development of the first statewide family courts in Rhode Island, New York, Hawaii and South Carolina (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 1959; and Page, 1993). By 1996, 23 states had adopted measures to consolidate, in whole or in part, legal matters that involve various family members in different legal proceedings (Hurst and Szymanski, 1996). At the same time, a number of national organizations also published policy statements supporting the trend toward establishing family courts, including the American Bar Association, Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, and NCJFCJ Nevada entered the movement in 1985 when legislation was introduced to create family courts in Washoe and Clark counties (Kuhn, 1991). The first bill did not pass but the policy discussion continued, eventually leading to Senate Joint Resolution 24, which introduced a referendum to amend the state Constitution such that the Nevada Legislature could have authority to enact the structural revisions. The measure appeared as Question 1 on the 1990 general election ballot and was passed, amended the state Constitution, and helped clear the path for a subsequent bill, SB 395, establishing family courts in Washoe and Clark counties effective January 1993 (Jordan, 1992).

The story of the legislative politics around the enabling legislation included conversations concerning appropriate case types for the new courts and debates such as whether juvenile delinquency should be part of the new family divisions, how the goals of specialization can be balanced with the peril of judicial burnout on emotionally draining assignments, the appropriate number of judicial positions for Washoe and Clark counties at the time, and the coordinated family division model as it might apply to rural jurisdictions. A host of compromises occurred, but in the end, the model implemented by the Nevada Legislature preserved many of the recommended features that a select few other states had implemented and that were recommended at the national level by the NCJFCJ in *Recommendations for a Model Family Court* (Katz and Kuhn, 1991). Twenty-five years later both Washoe and Clark counties have grown substantially in population size. Washoe County has several peer jurisdictions of similar size across the country operating a similar family division model, but Clark County has grown so rapidly that only the

family courts of New York City, which are organized at the borough/county-level are their peers operating a somewhat similar model. Over time, some large urban jurisdictions have conducted pilots but they have been limited to a suburban satellite court or to creating a hybrid model through an integrated intake process, without the goal of judicial specialization and retention in a combined family/juvenile division. Such examples are incomplete in comparison to the vision that Nevada implemented and many of them have been short-lived pilots that adopted parts or pieces of the Nevada menu for operating coordinated family divisions. This study re-affirms the importance of the vision that people of Nevada supported 2 to 1 in the referendum to amend the constitution and that the 66th Legislature thereafter crafted into SB 395.

Caseload Trends Reporting to the State

The NRS requires reporting of certain statistical information by district courts to the state court administrator (NRS 3.243). The AOC's Research and Statistics Unit provides analysis support for the Uniform System for Judicial Records (USJR) model. Interviews with AOC staff indicated a gradual progression in the quality and consistency of reporting on district court trends. Starting with Administrative Docket 0295 of 1999, the Supreme Court of Nevada administrative orders have incrementally increased the case type detail and consistency of reported data. By 2014, detailed case type reporting had expanded for all major case types and interviews suggest that accuracy is increasing each year. Pursuant to Administrative Docket 0398 of 2015 and in collaboration with the Nevada trial courts, the AOC has implemented certification procedures for court case management systems that identify and resolve inconsistencies that ensure the accurate and uniform reporting of data. In addition, the AOC receives, processes, and returns data to the district courts for verification. The advancement of reliable caseload data has required close communication and partnership with county/court information technology directors and court staff. As a result of these combined efforts, Nevada's USJR has moved from a ranking near the bottom of all states in 1999 to near the top (currently ranked 6th) by the National Center for State Courts. Current annual statistical reports and the statistical report appendix contain a high level of detail for specific family-related case types.

Washoe and Clark counties combined serve about 88% of Nevada's total population and about 90% of the children and youth population ages 0-17 within the state. In terms of overall filing statistics, combined Washoe and Clark counties account for 90% of all new family division filings (Washoe 16% and Clark 74%, respectively). The AOC report series is commendable for the details it gathers but a current limitation is that it does not display family division filings and dispositions across years in the level of detail required to present workload trends. NCJJ organized data from individual reports to develop the trends in Table 1 for Washoe County and Table 2 for Clark County. Fewer reporting

variability/inconsistencies exist within the adult or domestic relations case types than there is in juvenile case type reporting. Consistent with AOC interviews, the more recent years show greater progress toward consistency. Key findings for the adult or domestic relations case types include:

- In Washoe County between FY2014 and 2018, new filings across the adult case types increased 24% but reopened cases decreased 49% and dispositions decreased 11%.
- New filing increases in custody (non-divorce), requests for domestic violence protection, mental health cases, and guardianship cases are driving the increase.
- Clark County volumes are much higher than in Washoe County but overall new domestic relations filings have increased less dramatically than in Washoe, specifically, 10% between FY 2014 and 2018.
- Contributing to overall increases in Clark County adult cases are the case types for custody and visitation (non-divorce), child support enforcement (IV-D), adoption, mental health/involuntary commitment, and guardianship.
- Child support under the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (IV-D UIFSA) case filings decreased in both jurisdictions (35% decrease in Washoe County and 64% in Clark County).
- Adult case types collapsed into an “other” category have decreased in Washoe County but increased in Clark County.

Trend highlights for the juvenile caseload include:

- For Washoe County, for the FY 2014 data year, the report notes reporting discrepancies but those discrepancies were reduced in subsequent years.
- Using 2015 as the base year, between 2015 and 2018, overall juvenile filings decreased 10% in Washoe County.
- In Washoe County, juvenile delinquency trended consistently at about 950 new filings annually but child abuse/neglect petitions as they are reported to the AOC decreased 29% between 2015 and 2018.
- Reporting for Clark County was more consistent going back to 2014. Between 2014 and 2018, overall juvenile filings decreased by about 9%.
- New filings for juvenile delinquency decreased 11% for Clark County and child abuse/neglect petitions decreased 6%.

Table 1: Washoe County Family Division Filing and Disposition Trends 2014-18

Family Division Case Type	Activity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Trend
Adult Total *	New Filings (cases)	7,395	7,952	8,688	9,176	9,160	■ - ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	4,019	512	1,067	1,235	2,034	■ - - - - ■ ■
	Grand Total Dispositions	10,803	7,945	7,847	9,004	9,574	■ - - - - ■ ■
Marriage Dissolution	New Filings (cases)	2,205	2,160	2,231	2,209	2,214	■ - ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	NR	313	471	478	828	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	3,416	1,872	1,756	2,237	2,439	■ - - - - ■ ■
Paternity	New Filings (cases)	51	26	45	25	23	■ - ■ - - - ■
	Reopened (cases)	NR	19	12	19	24	■ - - - - ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	65	50	25	33	28	■ - ■ - - - ■
Visitation (Non-Divorce)	New Filings (cases)	NR	26	24	21	23	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	NR	1	0	0	0	■
	Total Dispositions	NR	10	20	16	22	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Adoption	New Filings (cases)	203	199	149	155	186	■ ■ - - - ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	NR	3	3	3	12	■ - - - - ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	116	153	121	151	175	■ - - - - ■ ■
Custody (Non-Divorce)	New Filings (cases)	430 ^a	439	417	456	548	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	NR	125	173	198	341	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	666	348	330	379	513	■ - - - - ■ ■
IV-D UIFSA ^b	New Filings (cases)	1,329	1,272	1,085	1,037	864	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ -
	Reopened (cases)	NR	29	376	518	771	■ - - - - ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	2,971	2,054	1,596	1,178	1,324	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ -
IV-D Intrastate ^b	New Filings (cases)	0	0	0	0	0	
	Reopened (cases)	0	0	0	0	0	
	Total Dispositions	0	0	0	0	0	
State Initiated (TPR) Petition	New Filings (cases)	105	95	93	121	152	■ - - - ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	NR	0	0	1	0	■
	Total Dispositions	87	114	97	66	125	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Other (TPR) Petition	New Filings (cases)	118	0	0	0	0	■
	Reopened (cases)	NR	1	0	3	1	■ - ■ ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	122	0	0	0	0	■
Request for Domestic Violence Protection Orders (TPOs)	New Filings (cases)	1,604	1,576	2,238	2,200	2,148	■ - - ■ ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	NR	7	7	9	44	■ - - - ■ ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	2,088	1,453	1,577	2,028	2,002	■ - - - ■ ■ ■
Mental Health (Involuntary Commitment)	New Filings (cases)	759	1,723	2,000	2,437	2,464	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	NR	0	0	1	0	■
	Total Dispositions	845	1,658	1,972	2,385	2,409	■ - ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Guardianship	New Filings (cases)	339	348	321	415	446	■ - - ■ ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	NR	14	22	1	4	■ ■ ■ - -
	Total Dispositions	262	168	286	450	441	■ - - ■ ■ ■ ■
Other Domestic Relations	New Filings (cases)	252	87	83	99	89	■ - - - - ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	4,019 ^c	0	3	4	9	■ ■ - - - -
	Total Dispositions	165	64	66	81	96	■ - - - - ■ ■
Juvenile Total *	New Filings (cases)	2,228	1,537	1,376	1,420	1,384	■ - - - - ■ ■
	Reopened (cases) ^d	NR	NR	1	0	0	■
	Grand Total Dispositions	1,069	1,047	889	1,142	1,148	■ ■ ■ - - ■ ■
Delinquency	New Filings (cases)	939	915	881	953	942	■ ■ ■ - - ■ ■
	Reopened (cases) ^d	0	0	1	0	0	■
	Total Dispositions	666	492	349	601	625	■ ■ ■ - - ■ ■
Child Abuse/Neglect Petition	New Filings (cases)	1,289	622	495	467	442	■ - - - - ■ ■
	Reopened (cases) ^d	NR	NR	0	0	0	
	Total Dispositions	403	555	540	541	523	■ - ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

* Totals include filings, reopened cases, and dispositions of detailed cases that may not be included in the table but are available in source reports. (i.e., adult other support, juvenile status petitions, juvenile miscellaneous petitions, dependent no fault, and other dependency child victim reports.)

^a Custody (Non-Divorce) includes Other Support.

^b IV-D UIFSA includes all IV-D matters.

^c Reopened cases are for all family case types.

^d Reopened cases under-reported.

^{NR} Not Reported

Source: Adapted from the report series, Annual Report of the Nevada Judiciary Appendix Tables (FY 14-18).

Table 2: Clark County Family Division Filing and Disposition Trends 2014-18

Family Division Case Type	Activity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Trend
Adult Total *	New Filings (cases)	38,708	39,693	41,167	42,853	42,545	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	15,453	17,828	22,337	26,005	21,105	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
	Grand Total Dispositions	52,090	54,952	61,212	64,391	68,060	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
Marriage Dissolution	New Filings (cases)	12,495	12,895	12,967	12,847	12,441	- ■ ■ ■ ■ -
	Reopened (cases)	2,926	2,721	2,877	2,856	2,972	■ - ■ ■ ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	15,464	15,502	16,299	16,131	15,557	- - ■ ■ ■ -
Paternity	New Filings (cases)	345	313	268	250	242	■ ■ ■ - - -
	Reopened (cases)	243	228	239	215	201	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ -
	Total Dispositions	635	538	545	539	430	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ -
Visitation (Non-Divorce)	New Filings (cases)	44	59	76	49	51	- - ■ ■ - -
	Reopened (cases)	8	6	10	14	29	- - - ■ ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	45	54	72	83	85	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
Adoption	New Filings (cases)	678	715	755	751	773	- ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	14	9	10	16	22	- - - ■ ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	708	722	765	776	809	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
Custody (Non-Divorce)	New Filings (cases)	1,440	1,703	1,912	2,134	2,159	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	731	858	994	1,061	1,141	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	2,049	2,342	2,852	3,135	3,376	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
IV-D UIFSA	New Filings (cases)	1,192	1,184	1,263	1,243	426	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ -
	Reopened (cases)	818	1,058	1,464	2,132	2,671	- - - ■ ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	2,212	2,344	2,174 ^a	2,044	5,620	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
IV-D Intrastate	New Filings (cases)	4,321	3,448	4,066	4,851	5,489	- - - ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	1,141	1,717	2,255	3,254	3,289	- - - ■ ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	3,656	3,632	3,553 ^a	4,286	10,133	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
State Initiated (TPR) Petition	New Filings (cases)	448	484	410	413	279	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ -
	Reopened (cases)	18	18	13	25	14	- - - ■ ■ -
	Total Dispositions	454	535	393	527	424	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ -
Other (TPR) Petition	New Filings (cases)	318	313	310	391	378	- - - ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	18	10	19	16	21	■ - ■ ■ ■ -
	Total Dispositions	368	320	314	401	434	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
Request for Domestic Violence Protection Orders (TPOs)	New Filings (cases)	7,485	7,680	7,790	8,392	8,744	- - - ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	323	85	72	33	50	■ - - - - -
	Total Dispositions	8,042	7,423	7,318	8,084	12,141 ^b	- - - ■ ■ ■
Mental Health (Involuntary Commitment)	New Filings (cases)	7,004	7,610	7,769	7,931	7,704	- ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	9,039	10,923	12,785	14,268	8,962	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	15,568	18,556	20,494	21,959	12,829	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
Guardianship	New Filings (cases)	1,609	1,725	1,803	1,660	1,724	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	31	49	1,466	1,996	1,579	- - - ■ ■ ■
	Total Dispositions	1,466	1,381	4,548 ^a	4,292	3,830	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
Other Domestic Relations	New Filings (cases)	1,329	1,564	1,778	1,941	2,128	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
	Reopened (cases)	143	146	133	119	154	■ ■ ■ - - ■
	Total Dispositions	1,423	1,603	1,885	2,134	2,386	- - ■ ■ ■ ■
Juvenile Total *	New Filings (cases)	6,675	6,761	5,991	5,889	6,046	■ ■ ■ - - -
	Reopened (cases)	687	891	734	677	622	- - ■ ■ - -
	Grand Total Dispositions	7,747	6,536	6,324	6,319	5,971	■ ■ ■ - - -
Delinquency	New Filings (cases)	5,192	5,216	4,457	4,437	4,643	■ ■ ■ - - -
	Reopened (cases)	634	828	670	629	571	- - ■ ■ - -
	Total Dispositions	4,864	4,787	4,725	4,708	4,515	■ ■ ■ ■ - -
Child Abuse/Neglect Petition	New Filings (cases)	1,475	1,536	1,522	1,423	1,392	- ■ ■ ■ ■ -
	Reopened (cases)	53	63	64	48	50	■ ■ ■ ■ - -
	Total Dispositions	2,883	1,720	1,597	1,596	1,383	■ - - - - -

* Totals include filings, reopened cases, and dispositions of detailed cases that may not be included in the table but are available in source reports. (i.e., adult other support, juvenile status petitions, juvenile miscellaneous petitions, dependent no fault, and other dependency child victim).

^a Reported dispositions exclude 44,183 administrative closures of older IV-D UIFSA cases, 20,831, IV-D Intrastate cases, and 4,978 guardianship cases to provide a better representation of current cases addressed by the court this fiscal year.

^b Includes administrative closures.

Source: Adapted from the report series, Annual Report of the Nevada Judiciary Appendix Tables (FY 14-18).

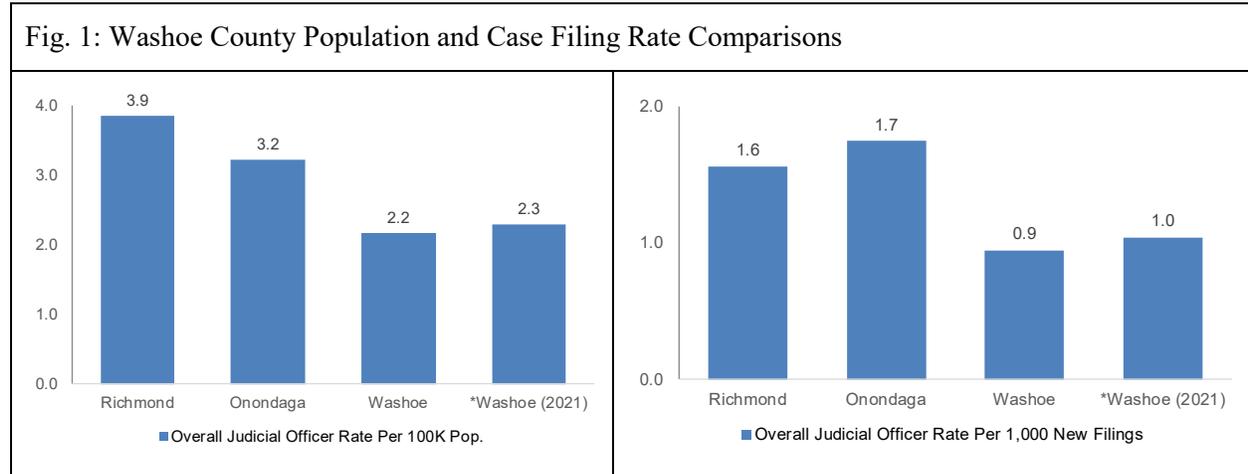
Judicial Officer Resource Comparison

What constitutes a reasonable judicial workload has been an ongoing challenge since the creation of the coordinated family divisions in Washoe and Clark counties. The timeframe and scope for this study required a starting place for discussing the adequacy of judicial officer resources in Washoe and Clark counties. NCJJ proposed a normative method involving comparisons across similar size jurisdictions of judicial officer resources assigned to the family division/court (Hurst 1999). The size of Clark County limits the number of comparison jurisdictions to the family courts operating in boroughs/counties of New York City (Table 3). However, in terms of the region, Maricopa County, AZ is considered more relatable to Clark County by project stakeholders and therefore were added to enable comparisons.

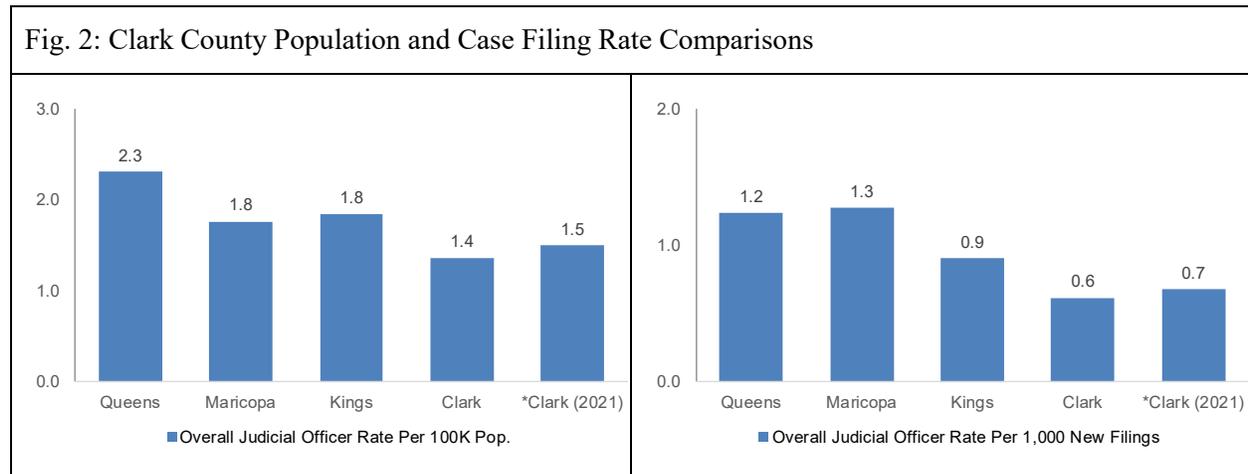
Table 3: Judicial Officers Available to Hear Juvenile and Family Cases in Selected Jurisdictions

County	Total Population	Family Div. New Filings (2018)	Judge FTE	Hearing Master/Officer FTE	Overall Judicial Officer FTE	Judge Rate Per 100K Pop.	Judge Rate Per 1,000 New Filings	Overall Judicial Officer Rate Per 100K Pop.	Overall Judicial Officer Rate Per 1,000 New Filings
Washoe Co. Comparison Set									
Staten Island Family Court, New York, NY (1) (2)	479,458	11,843	8	10.5	18.5	1.7	0.7	3.9	1.6
Second Judicial District, Family Division, Reno Nevada (2019 judicial resources)	460,587	10,544	6	4	10	1.3	0.6	2.2	0.9
Second Judicial District, Family Division, Reno Nevada (2021 judicial resources)	475,902	10,544	7	4	11	1.5	0.7	2.3	1.0
Onondaga County Family Court, Syracuse, NY (1) (2)	465,398	8,584	7	8	15	1.5	0.8	3.2	1.7
Clark Co. Comparison Set									
Maricopa County Superior Court, Phoenix, AZ (3)	4,307,033	59,766	51.5	24.5	76	1.2	0.9	1.8	1.3
Kings (Brooklyn) Family Court, New York, NY (1) (2)	2,648,771	54,194	27	22	49	1.0	0.5	1.8	0.9
Queens Family Court, New York, NY (1) (2)	2,358,582	44,074	37	17.5	54.5	1.6	0.8	2.3	1.2
Eighth Judicial District, Family Division, Las Vegas, NV (2019 judicial resources)	2,204,079	48,591	20	10	30	0.9	0.4	1.4	0.6
Eighth Judicial District, Family Division, Las Vegas, NV, (2021 judicial resources)	2,243,694	48,591	26	7	33	1.2	0.5	1.5	0.7
<p>(1) New York family courts do not have jurisdiction over divorce matters. The Unified Courts of New York graciously assisted with augmenting the judicial officer FTEs for family court with FTEs allocated to divorce (matrimonial matters heard in the Supreme Court for Civil Matters).</p> <p>(2) New York family court case filings for 2018 were provided by the Unified Courts of New York for each comparison jurisdiction. The family court statistics were augmented by estimating the divorce filings based on the New York State Unified Court System 2018 Annual Report and the proportion of cases divorces represented in Supreme Civil Court new filings statewide (about 25%).</p> <p>(3) Maricopa County, Arizona serves a population size two times greater than that of Clark County and the court structure is specialized with juvenile, family and probate departments.</p>									
<p>Sources: Annual Report of Nevada Judiciary Fiscal Year 2018 Appendix Tables, online, https://nvcourts.gov/Supreme/Reports/Annual_Reports/2018_Annual_Report/; Public Information Office, Unified Courts of New York; New York State Unified Court System 2018 Annual Report, online, https://www.nycourts.gov/legacypdfs/18_UCS-Annual_Report.pdf; 2021 population estimates. Nevada County Population Projections 2015 to 2034, online, https://tax.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/taxnv.gov/Content/TaxLibrary/Nevada_County_Population_Projections_2015-2034.pdf</p>									

Based on rates calculated for overall judicial officers available to hear family division cases (the last two columns of Table 3), both Washoe and Clark counties have fewer resources than any of their respective comparison jurisdictions. In the instance of Washoe County, they currently (2019) have one less full-time position than either Richmond or Onondaga counties, NY for every 100,000 total population served (Fig. 1). The differences are also pronounced when considering the rate by new family division filings.



When making rate comparisons based on the total population served and the most recent available year of family division case filings, Clark County also appears to be operating with fewer judicial officer resources than its comparison jurisdictions (Fig 2). For example, compared to Queens County, NY, Clark County has 0.9 fewer full-time judicial positions available per 100,000 total population in 2019. The differences are less pronounced for Maricopa County, AZ or Kings County, NY, but still represent 0.4 fewer overall judicial positions per 100,000 total population.



The Nevada Legislature is responding to the workload pressure with additional judicial allocations authorized for 2021. This normative workload comparison incorporated a separate line (bar) for the 2021 allocations for both Nevada jurisdictions in Figures 1 and 2, however, both jurisdictions will continue to operate at a deficit in comparison to comparably sized jurisdictions. In the absence of national standards for judicial officer resources assigned to family divisions, this report provides initial estimates of the magnitude of the judicial officer deficit based on the norms of other jurisdictions. In other words, how many additional judicial officer FTEs need to be added in the family divisions of Washoe and Clark counties for them to be resourced at levels comparable to other relatable jurisdictions. To calculate the deficit the following formula was used:

$$\frac{X \text{ (no. of addtl. judicial officers for Washoe or Clark)}}{\text{Total population for Washoe or Clark}} = \frac{\text{Comparison jurisdiction's overall judicial officer rate}}{100,000}$$

Based upon the future (2021) overall judicial officer resource allocations in Nevada:

- Washoe County requires an additional 4.2 judicial FTEs to match the 3.2 judicial FTEs available per 100,000 total population in Onondaga County, NY Family Court, on the low end, and an additional 7.5 FTE judicial officer positions to match the overall judicial officer rate in Staten Island, NY Family Court, on the high end.
- Clark County requires an additional 7.4 FTE judicial officer positions to match the overall judicial officer rate per 100,000 total population in Maricopa County, AZ Superior Court or the Kings County, NY Family Court, on the low end, and an additional 18.6 judicial officer positions to match the resources rate of the Queens County, NY Family Court.

These estimates address the anticipated deficit using the 2021 allocations with the comparison jurisdictions as they are currently resourced and do not consider population growth projections beyond 2021 or weight the needs for allocations by family division case type.

Stakeholder Surveys

A primary data collection activity for this study was the administration of an electronic stakeholder survey to judicial officers (judges and hearing masters) in Washoe and Clark counties and a separate stakeholder survey for staff in agencies that work closely with the respective family divisions. The judicial officer survey was administered in late April 2019 and the companion stakeholder survey was administered in June. Both surveys had the same overarching question format so that most of the findings can be reported together. The purpose of the surveys was to reach as many of the professionals working

day-to-day in the family courts and measure their attitudes regarding the goals of family court and the performance of their respective family divisions.

Survey participation among judicial officers was robust. All of the judges and hearing masters in each jurisdiction responded and completed all survey questions. The Supreme Court strongly encouraged judicial officer participation but respondents were not asked to enter their name. At the suggestion of judicial survey testers from Nevada (retired urban and sitting rural judges) most questions had a place for open-ended comments to be entered. Many judicial officer respondents took advantage of this design to provide specific commentary. Selected comments are included for each survey question after the result tables or summaries. To preserve anonymity, comments that could identify an individual are omitted and responses are organized across both jurisdictions and respondent types. The stakeholder survey was administered to expand the voice of those who could not be reached during on-site interviews. Each family division administrator provided a listing of agency leaders and staff and had some flexibility to customize their respective distribution lists. In Washoe County, 48 family division staff were invited to participate and 81 juvenile and family bar members were directly emailed the survey. Additionally, 28 leaders of agencies that work with the family division on a regular basis were invited to participate. The leaders of the child welfare and juvenile justice agencies were invited to share the invitation with their staff. NCJJ received 70 responses to the stakeholder survey from Washoe County. Among respondents 32% (22) identified as family division staff, 31% (21) as private attorneys, 9% (6) as legal services, 7% (5) as district attorney, 9% (6) as public defender, 6% (4) as family services, 1% (1) as sheriff's office, and 4% (5) did not identify their agency or skipped the question. The small number of respondents who identified with a social services role was a limitation of the Washoe stakeholder survey findings.

In Clark County, 103 family division staff, including the clerk's office, were invited to participate. The chairs of the juvenile and family bar invited their members to participate and agency leaders of child welfare and juvenile justice agencies were invited to share the invitation with their staff. NCJJ received 48 responses to the stakeholder survey from Clark County. Among stakeholder respondents, 63% (30) identified as a family division staff/clerks, 19% (9) as legal services staff, 6% (3) as probation staff, 4% (2) as CASA program staff, 2% (1) as a private attorney, and 3 respondents skipped the question. Survey coverage among the bar was disappointing and a limiting factor for Clark County survey findings. Similar to Washoe County, the response from stakeholders identifying as a social service agency role was also low and a limitation.

Judicial Officer Specialization

Judicial specialization within the family division was a goal for the 1990's coordinated family division reforms. Survey results indicate considerable longevity in both jurisdictions among judges, but also among stakeholders that responded to the survey. The survey data indicate that about one-third of the judges in Washoe County had been in their current assignment more than 10 years, one-third had been in their position between 3 and 10 years, and one-third had been in their position for 2 years or less. Among Washoe County stakeholder respondents, about 41% reported experience more than 10 years, 41% between 3 and 10 years, and 17% for 2 years or less.

In contrast, nearly half of the family division judges in Clark County (48%) indicated a length of service in the family court more than 10 years, about 40% reported experience between 3 and 10 years, and 3 judges or hearing masters reported experience of 2 years or less. Among Clark County stakeholder respondents, 43% had been in their current assignments more than 10 years, 32% between 3 and 10 years, and 25% for 2 years or less.

Judicial officers also reported a broad range of experience with family division case types. In Washoe County, two-thirds of judicial officers reported experience with child support (67%); temporary protection orders (67%); and 56% reported experience with paternity, custody, inter-jurisdictional enforcement of support, termination of parental rights, adoption of child and adoption of adult (56% each). Fewer Washoe County judicial officers reported experience with juvenile case types or guardianships of minors and adults than did for domestic relations case types.

In Clark County, more than half of judicial officers reported experience with child support (83%), adoption of children (79%), termination of parental rights (76%), minor guardianship (76%), paternity (69%), visitation (69%), divorce/dissolution (66%), custody (66%), name changes (59%), inter-jurisdictional enforcement of support (52%), and adoption of adults (52%). This survey finding supports interview observations that most judges and hearing masters were comfortable with the potential breadth of assignments they can receive in the family division operating model. Fewer respondents had experience with juvenile case types, temporary protection orders, and adult guardianship and conservatorship case types.

Family Division Operating Goals

The survey design integrated some of the commonly accepted trial court operating goals that have also been applied to family courts in other states (see Babb and Kuhn, 2002). Most judges and hearing masters in both jurisdictions agreed or strongly agreed that the family division operating model should support:

- Access to Justice: Families need to have easy-to-use and affordable access (in terms of both cost and duration of litigation) to courts with proceedings that are understandable, especially to parties without lawyers.
- Expeditious and Timely Disposition: Effective and efficient case processing from intake to resolution that limits delays and minimizes ongoing exposure to adversarial hearings.
- Equity, Fairness, and Integrity: Courts need to coordinate all of the relevant family information and provide appropriately trained judicial officers to ensure adequate individual attention to the issues involved in each case, maximize the consistency of treatment across cases and decisionmakers, and minimize conflicting orders.
- Independence and Accountability: To effectively use public resources, courts need to coordinate their support for families with human service agencies and the community-at-large, increase coordination between social agencies, reduce conflicting orders, expedite matters for families in court and shorten the time children must remain in court.
- Public Trust and Confidence: Courts need the trust and confidence of the public to maintain a credible role in addressing family legal issues.

Judges and hearing masters in Washoe County are unanimous in agreeing or strongly agreeing with the above goals as elements of the family division operations. There is also general agreement in Clark County with these principles. However, in Clark County, a few judicial officer respondents (4 among 29) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with expeditious and timely disposition and independence and accountability being goals for family division operations in Nevada.

Case Coordination

In Washoe County, three-quarters of judicial officer respondents (7 of 9) either agreed or strongly agreed that consolidating juvenile and family law cases improves coordination and management of cases involving the same family and should be an operational objective of the family division. Two respondents neither disagreed/nor agreed (Table 4).

In Clark County, about half of judicial officer either agreed or strongly agreed that case coordination or consolidation in juvenile and family law cases improves the management of cases involving the same family. About one-quarter of judicial officer respondents were neutral and one quarter disagreed or strongly disagreed the policy has a benefit. In contrast, over two-thirds of the Clark County stakeholders responding to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that the family division operating model improves case management within the family division.

Table 4: To what extent do you agree that consolidating juvenile and family law cases improves the coordination and management of cases involving the same family? (i.e., the same judge hears all case types related to the same family)

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither		Agree		Strongly agree		Total
Washoe judicial	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	22.2%	2	33.3%	3	44.4%	4	9
Washoe stakeholders	7.5%	5	6.0%	4	10.5%	7	37.3%	25	38.8%	26	67
Clark judicial	10.7%	3	14.3%	4	25.0%	7	17.9%	5	32.1%	9	28
Clark stakeholders	7.5%	3	15.0%	6	10.0%	4	25.0%	10	42.5%	17	40

Sources: Nevada Family Court Assessment Judicial Officer Survey and the Nevada Family Court Assessment Stakeholder Survey.

Survey respondents noted question phrasing and definitional challenges for this question that can be improved in the future (e.g., the definition of case consolidation in contrast to case coordination).

However, the comments under this question were extensive, insightful and helped to refine the on-site interview protocols. Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- I agree in principle. However, it may be challenging to schedule stakeholders going into several courtrooms and every judge having the appropriate legal and current knowledge to handle each case type including being aware of any Federal regulations and legislative changes that occur every 2 years.
- For clarification, we rarely consolidate one case type into another; such practice is disfavored as distinct issues are often lost in case consolidation of one case type into another.
- While this may be a laudable goal, the Courts do not act in a vacuum but must be cognizant of the limitations of other agencies (e.g., District Attorney, CAP attorneys, Parent attorneys, child protection agencies, support agencies) to staff multiple courts simultaneously.
- Child protection is a specialized area of fact and law which does not lend itself to easy replication among all judicial officers.
- The Family Division uses a one-judge-one family protocol in which related cases are heard by a single judge except for specialized areas largely heard by Family Court Masters.
- Although the [we] follow one-judge-one-family principles for civil-domestic matters, the expansion of these principles to juvenile dependency and delinquency might create problems.
- Would avoid inconsistency in decisions and more consolidation in decision making.
- Our jurisdiction has a heavy caseload. I have heard of this in other jurisdictions, but have not seen actual data on the size of the caseload in such jurisdictions. I would be interested in this idea if it can be managed properly and does not result in delays in the court proceedings.
- One Judge One Family has been an aspirational goal for Family Court. However, the complexity of implementing this means that, in reality, the Court falls far short of this.
- Though some judges are better than others, having one judge hear all matters makes sense.
- Stakeholders are better able to serve the families when receiving direction from one judge. Families experience less time in Court and are more accountable when receiving direction from one Judge.
- I find it unusual to have issues in one area without parallel or corollary issues [in] another. Domestic violence between parents always has an effect on the children.

- Where a party intends to keep facts or circumstances out of the knowledge of the courts, it is more difficult to do that when the judge can see the whole picture.

In responding to a question concerning how case consolidation is accomplished in the two jurisdictions, judicial officers in both jurisdictions differed in their explanations of how case consolidation through assignment occurs. In Washoe County, about one-third of judicial officers indicated that the case assignment is systematic but is only for select case types or does not occur (Table 5). In Clark County, a greater proportion of judicial officer respondents indicated consolidation occurring through selective requests across departments.

	Washoe		Clark	
Systemically across all eligible case types	0.0%	0	6.9%	2
Systematically, but for select case types only (e.g., delinquency and dependency)	33.3%	3	13.8%	4
Selectively by request from other departments	0.0%	0	27.6%	8
There is no consolidation of juvenile and family law cases in my department	33.3%	3	27.6%	8
Other (please specify) (see comments below table)	33.3%	3	24.1%	7

Source: Nevada Family Court Assessment Judicial Officer Survey.

Comments for this question that are associated with the other (specify) category included:

- Such consolidation is done on a case by case basis, by placing eligible cases into a [special docket] caseload.
- Not necessarily consolidation in the traditional sense of consolidating cases, but I do work with other departments to coordinate in order to hear certain cases involving the same families/juveniles on a selective/case-by-case basis when I see appropriate related cases. It has, however, to date been relatively rare.
- I know delinquency and dependency are heard together for cases designated as Project One, but not all children who have both types of these cases are assigned to Project One. I'm not sure how the assignment occurs.
- Don't believe that technical consolidation is always appropriate, but as to Family Court custody matters I am assigned to, it is critical that I am aware of, and have access to, relevant juvenile files that may potentially impact my decisions. It is critical to be fully informed of all relevant proceedings involving the care of the minors at issue.
- Civil-domestic matters are related to one another and heard by the same judicial department. We have started the relating of juvenile dependency and delinquency matters.
- Custody decisions in family cases are held in abeyance if there is a pending dependency case unless the dependency officer specifically authorizes the other court to proceed.
- Unsure about the definition of the term.

In both counties, there was more divergence of opinion on identifying the most needed resource to function optimally under the case coordination goal of coordinated family divisions (Table 6). In Washoe County, judicial training and additional positions were the most frequent responses. In Clark County, the most frequent response was better technology to identify related family cases at filing, followed by more judicial training to learn all case types.

Table 6: What resources are required to fully coordinate family cases? (i.e., systematically consolidate all case types before the same judge.) Select all that apply.

	Washoe		Clark	
Better technology to identify related family cases at filing	55.6%	5	64.3%	18
More judicial training to learn all case types a family court judge or master may be assigned	88.9%	8	53.6%	15
Additional judicial positions (new departments)	77.8%	7	50.0%	14
Additional hearing master positions	33.3%	3	35.7%	10
Other (please specify) (see comments below table)	55.6%	5	42.9%	12

Source: Nevada Family Court Assessment Judicial Officer Survey.

Selected comments across jurisdictions provide rich insights into the challenges of achieving this family division operating goal and include:

- Full consolidation, without exception, will require available time each day for each judge to meet hearing demands of exigent cases such as mental health commitments, orders of protection, child welfare protective custody hearings, juvenile detention hearings, and other emergency matters while also accommodating the ongoing demands of non-emergency domestic matters in a manner that disposes of all cases in a timely and responsive manner.
- Attorney stakeholders such as district attorneys, public defenders, CASA representatives, domestic violence advocates and other stakeholders associated with specialized casework would be spread thin between all Departments in a manner that could slow down [the] disposition of cases based on [the] unavailability of necessary counsel.
- If this model were fully implemented, judges would be capable of adjudicating all manner of cases, with some requiring additional training.
- Additional case managers would also be necessary. Although I disagree that this is the appropriate model for all cases.
- Judicial silos make consolidation of all cases involving a single family not possible.
- Changes in how cases are docketed in order to set/hear the same family. Working with stakeholders regarding the docket given the limited number of DAs, PDs, alternate PDs, probation, parole, and WCHSA (formerly CPS) stakeholders who also participate in these hearings.
- Address issues related to juvenile delinquency cases being heard at a separate courthouse at Jan Evans removed and distant from the Family Court.
- Additional court staff to help relate and identify cases that technology misses.
- Family Court judges having full access to juvenile files, and CPS records. Also, when the Family Court custody case appears on the screen, any relevant juvenile case [numbers] should also appear on screen, even if the two cases may never be consolidated.

- We may be able to reassign some existing hearing masters but would need additional hearing masters assigned to work with each department. For example, we could assign one hearing master to work with each existing judicial department.
- All agencies who staff specialty courts would need to have sufficient staff positions to staff all courts.
- Coordination with community partners and appropriate staffing by such partners to cover 20+ potential departments. Also, we currently have exceptional technology that has been working diligently to coordinate one-judge-one-family assignments. This is a work in progress that, at times, has generated some frustration. However, working together, we should be on our way to completing this process in the civil-domestic arena.
- If one was to coordinate delinquency/dependency cases with regular domestic cases, the requirements to effectively do so would, in my opinion, be extremely difficult and could lead to less effective handling of these cases with vast inconsistency of decision which could even draw in Constitutional concerns.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

In Washoe County, most respondents indicated that the family division encourages the resolution of disputes before the court through non-adversarial methods (hereinafter ADR) (Table 7). Specifically, 7 of 9 judicial officer respondents indicated this happens a lot or a great deal. A similar proportion of Washoe County stakeholders believe the family division promotes ADR a lot or a great deal. Very few stakeholders indicated none at all. In Clark County, most judicial respondents also thought that their family division engaged in ADR a lot (22%) or a great deal (52%).

Table 7: To what extent does your department encourage the resolution of disputes before the court through non-adversarial methods?													
	None		A Little		Moderately		A Lot		A Great Deal		Unsure		Total
Washoe Judicial	22.2%	2	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	22.2%	2	55.6%	5	0%	0	9
Washoe Stakeholders	1.5%	1	4.5%	3	19.4%	13	20.9%	14	52.2%	35	1.5%	1	67
Clark Judicial	0.0%	0	14.8%	4	11.1%	3	22.2%	6	51.9%	14	0%	0	27
Clark Stakeholders	2.6%	1	7.7%	3	12.8%	5	10.3%	4	59.0%	23	7.7%	3	39

Sources: Nevada Family Court Assessment Judicial Officer Survey and the Nevada Family Court Assessment Stakeholder Survey.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- I spend many hours voluntarily serving as a Settlement Judge for cases assigned to other departments. As to the cases assigned to my department, I am known for exploring a resolution on as many issues as the parties and attorneys are willing to discuss.
- We routinely offer mediation in termination of parental rights cases.
- This Court recommends the parties utilize alternative dispute resolution in all cases. The unfortunate part about the process is the lack of resources. Additionally, affecting the process

is the court's inability to spend enough time with the families to craft orders that are necessary to prevent ongoing litigation and multiple visits to the courtroom.

- We have various resources at low or no charge to litigants, such as [the] Family Mediation Center, UNLV mediation, Judicial Settlement Program and [a] Senior Judge Settlement Program. Most parties are assigned to at least one, if not two, alternative dispute resolution venues to assist in settlement.
- Mediation and Settlement Conferences are the norm, not the exception. Non-adversarial resolution is a major component of the family division mission statement. We all know that families have better outcomes when they have a voice in the process.
- The Judges most successful with this process give the participants active feedback on what they can expect moving forward, including both strengths and weaknesses of their cases based on the known facts and applicable law, and also warn as to risks in maintaining an unwinnable position.
- I am unaware of all services Nevada court provides to ensure alternative resolutions. This would be interesting to review stats if there are any.
- Most judges encourage the parties to resolve their issues on their own if they are able to do so prior to the Court's involvement and suggest and/or refer to attempt a resolution.

After addressing overarching goals and provisions specific to the family division model as the legislature establishes in the NRS, both the judicial and stakeholder surveys organized questions about family division operations into the five overarching family court goals (see p. 17). The questions were designed to provide a sense of how the courts operate and to prepare for site visits interviews.

Access to Justice

The judicial survey asked a yes/no question about whether non-traditional court hours were offered. In Washoe County, all judicial officer respondents indicated, no. In Clark County, all of the respondents indicated that the family division does not currently offer this type of access. Courtroom staffing challenges limit the ability to schedule regular hearings at non-traditional times although it would help families and children from missing work or school. However, open-ended comments suggested that Clark County had tried non-traditional docket times. Collectively, there was interest in advancing solutions, but current judicial workloads prevent them.

Selected comments across jurisdictions include:

- The family division offers after-hours availability of judges and masters for issuance of domestic violence orders of protection and warrants to pick up children from abusive or neglectful homes.
- In limited cases, I have participated in settlement conferences outside of the courthouse. I have limited additional ability given the court budget and the need for litigants to be safe at all stages of the proceedings. Litigant safety requires a court setting with [the] appropriate screening of litigants prior to coming into the court and additional security officers to provide a safe place for the litigants to meet. The need for safe courts for families cannot be

overstated. Family cases are the most dangerous for litigants and the most volatile cases for judicial officers to address.

- If the court calendar goes long, we do go into the lunch hour or past 5 pm to finish cases. However, we try to be cognizant of staff and their family obligations. There is always a concern about the well-being of staff.
- A best practice identified by NCJFCJ in juvenile delinquency proceedings is to hold detention hearings on Saturdays. Our jurisdiction doesn't currently do this.
- I would love to, but I don't think matters are currently structured wherein that option would be permitted.
- I have proposed the use of non-traditional court hours, however, due to staffing concerns and security it was determined not to be feasible at the moment.
- We start at 8:30 a.m. and stay as long as needed within reason to our courtroom employees. Evenings are rare. Weekends — never. With the exception of being on call for warrants/TPOs.
- I used to run night court for uncontested divorce hearings and other matters, prove up hearings, etc. Due to county budgeting and no more overtime, we don't have that anymore.

The judicial officer survey asked a question about the co-location of family-serving agencies within the courthouse. In Washoe County, nearly all respondents indicated that the family division facility co-locates juvenile and family services at the courthouse, or provides space for agency liaisons (Table 8). The same held true for Clark County, but open-ended responses indicated that space limitations were decreasing this feature of the court and fragmenting services to other locations.

Table 8: Does your department co-locate access to services?				
	Washoe		Clark	
Yes, we have service agencies located in the court	44.4%	4	48.3%	14
Yes, we have liaisons to connect clients to services	66.7%	6	51.7%	15
No	0.0%	0	17.2%	5
Other (please specify) (see comments below table)	55.6%	5	24.1%	7

Source: Nevada Family Court Assessment Judicial Officer Survey.

Comments under the other (please specify responses) included:

- We have a Nevada State Welfare agency representative available in the Family Division to assist persons [to] complete applications for benefits.
- Protection Order Help Center on-site.
- My department keeps information related to programs in the community to hand out but we have no co-located services within the department itself.
- The Court has mediation, family peace center programs, self-help center services, family support services and law library services in the buildings comprising the court.
- We have mediation available to help resolve custody and visitation issues.

- We are housed at the Jan Evans Juvenile Justice Center where the Dept of Juvenile Services is also located.
- IV-D courtrooms were moved from Family Court several years and placed with Dept. of Family Services in order for litigations to have all IV-D child support services located together.
- We have service agencies in the courthouse for Juvenile Justice, Mental Health, Medicaid, etc., but we do not have services available for domestic or dependency case types.
- We have 2 courthouses! We provide ZERO access to other services, unless they are mandated through criminal proceedings or dependency.
- Only certain departments have this ability and the services are provided through partner agencies such as: probation, DA's office, Legal Aid Southern NV.

Washoe County judicial officer respondents indicated that language services for non-English participants are a strength of the family division, with a variety of strategies, including courtroom translators, multi-lingual court website information and brochures and multi-lingual court staff (Table 9). Clark County respondents also noted similar strategies but were more likely to comment about limitations, such as court translator fees and limited information translated to Spanish.

Table 9: What features does your department have to ensure accessibility for non-English speaking participants?				
	Washoe		Clark	
Multi-lingual court website information	11.1%	1	27.6%	8
Multi-lingual informational brochures	22.2%	2	55.2%	16
Multi-lingual court documents/orders	11.1%	1	31.0%	9
Courtroom translators	100.0%	9	96.6%	28
Multi-lingual court staff	55.6%	5	34.5%	10
Multi-lingual court appointed counsel	0.0%	0	20.7%	6
Other (please explain) (see below table)	22.2%	2	17.2%	5

Source: Nevada Family Court Assessment Judicial Officer Survey.

Comments under the other (please explain responses) included:

- As a rule, we have court translators in all of our Family Division hearings requiring the same.
- We have other services including those listed above, but not on a comprehensive basis.
- Website information and information brochures in [E]nglish and [S]panish.
- Translators available for court appointed counsel.
- Unfortunately, funding and services in this area need to be expanded to a significant degree.
- The only translators that appear in court are those who are retained by the parties.

- I see [many] Hispanic and Latino litigants in my courtroom each week. If they cannot afford, I must give them [a] pro bono court interpreter and the interpreter's office has been very good about that.
- Some court documents are available in Spanish but on a limited basis.
- [We] routinely use the court interpreter's office to translate documents and orders

Stakeholders in both counties viewed the efforts of the family divisions to accommodate non-English speaking participants at a similar level. About 70% of Washoe County and 68% of Clark County stakeholders felt like their respective family division did a lot or a great deal to accommodate language challenges (Table 10).

Table 10: Stakeholders: based on your experience working in Nevada family courts, to what extent are non-English speaking participants accommodated by the court?

	Not At All		A Little		Moderately		A Lot		A Great Deal		Unsure		Total
Washoe stakeholders	0.0%	0	6.1%	4	18.2%	12	22.7%	15	48.5%	32	4.6%	3	66
Clark stakeholders	0.0%	0	2.6%	1	5.3%	2	23.7%	9	60.5%	23	7.9%	3	38

Nevada Family Court Assessment Stakeholder Survey.

In both Washoe and Clark counties, about 80% or more of judicial respondents responded to a yes/no item indicating, yes their family divisions consider the client’s ability to pay when imposing court fees and costs (Table 11). The judicial officers also rated their respective family divisions as having a moderate amount or a lot of legal information for self-represented litigants. Washoe County stakeholders were less likely to agree, with about 37% indicating not at all or a little. In Clark County, the proportion of stakeholder respondents expressing a negative opinion on this question is lower, coming in at about 26% thinking the family division does this not at all or a little.

Table 11: Based on your experience working with Nevada family courts, to what extent are costs assessed by the family court a financial burden for families seeking an effective resolution to their case?

	Not At All		A Little		Moderately		A Lot		A Great Deal		Unsure		Total
Washoe stakeholders	4.5%	3	32.8%	22	29.9%	20	7.5%	5	9.0%	6	16.4%	11	67
Clark stakeholders	7.9%	3	18.4%	7	23.7%	9	13.2%	5	15.8%	6	21.1%	8	38

Nevada Family Court Assessment Stakeholder Survey.

Selected comments across jurisdictions include:

- Our fee waiver standard is 185% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines and exemption of a home, car and \$2,000 in liquid assets.
- The use of fee waivers must be done only in qualifying cases as a portion of court filing fees are also used to help supplement the budget of legal services agencies such as Washoe Legal Services. Granting fee waivers in inappropriate cases means that the agencies which exist to assist low-income litigants will not get appropriate funding.
- No free parking. Way too expensive to obtain a copy of a court recording (the record).
- Stipulated matters that require little or almost no court involvement should not be similar in cost to those cases that require significant judicial resources.
- Most families are awarded fee waivers when they cannot afford filing fees; many families take advantage of this opportunity.
- I think fee waivers are granted generously. However, I think there is poor education about their availability.
- Get rid of attorney's fees and prohibit any fines being imposed. The vast majority of the families in the juvenile justice system are indigent/living in poverty or near poverty already.
- Costs have gotten significant over the years and they don't appear to support the actual needs of the Court as the legislature continues to add mandates without funding.
- Repeatedly, I have seen parents express their inability to pay for required classes for case compliance.
- In almost all cases, families are given the opportunity to express their financial difficulties. Only on a few occasions have I seen a judge or hearing master take on solving the financial burden to support reunification.

In Washoe County, about two-thirds of judicial officers indicated that their family division provides a lot or a great deal of access to community legal resources and legal information. Washoe County stakeholders generally agreed. About 54% think that the family division meets this need a lot or a great deal (Table 12).

In Clark County, about 59% of judicial officers think that their family division provides a lot or a great deal of assistance to self-represented litigants in the court. A much higher proportion of Clark County stakeholders feel the same way (about 84%)

Table 12: To what extent do self-represented litigants have access to the full spectrum of community legal resources and/or information?													
	None		A Little		Moderately		A Lot		A Great Deal		Unsure		Total
Washoe judicial	0.0%	0	11.1%	1	22.2%	2	33.3%	3	33.3%	3	0%	0	9
Washoe stakeholders	3.0%	2	14.9%	10	23.9%	16	34.3%	23	19.4%	13	4.5%	3	67
Clark judicial	0.0%	0	18.5%	5	22.2%	6	18.5%	5	40.7%	11	0.0%	0	27
Clark stakeholders	0.0%	0	2.6%	1	5.3%	2	23.7%	9	60.5%	23	7.9%	3	38

Sources: Nevada Family Court Assessment Judicial Officer Survey and the Nevada Family Court Assessment Stakeholder Survey.

Survey comments provided specific examples of resources in both jurisdictions but provided caveats as to their limitations such as:

- It's been improving, but it's a process. More funding and greater education and direction as to what is currently available are a necessity.
- Some information is provided to litigants when the need is obvious. Much depends on the litigant's own efforts to explore resources and review information.
- We have two legal aid agencies in our District: Washoe Legal Services and Nevada Legal Services. Their services are of high quality. Unfortunately, they are unable to serve everyone who needs legal assistance in the family division based on limited resources.
- The District Court also has an excellent Self-Help Center with [self-represented] forms available in virtually every area of Family Court. Despite such invaluable service, [self-represented] litigants are still significantly challenged by having no counsel in the majority of our cases.
- Our self-help center is amazing and so are the people who staff it. Unfortunately, it is not open 8-5 M-F, let alone nights or weekends. Nor can parties file documents there. The online videos available on the website are not only outdated and contain incorrect law, but strongly encourage self-represented litigants to obtain counsel.
- I believe they have access -- but the offerings are fairly slim and often not very helpful. It would be good for our Self-Help center to utilize an attorney not to give legal advice but to better advise on [the] next steps and processes as people are now often getting bad information. The Self-Help center could also use a better list of referrals and resources, updated frequently.
- Self-represented litigants are generally not aware of [the] full spectrum of services they could access.
- I have only seen a few people attempt to represent themselves and in all cases they were offered free legal counsel.
- It would be nice if there were additional resources that could be provided instead of the [self-represented] litigants constantly asking for legal advice.
- They have access to it, but sometimes have no idea where to find it. The self-help center sometimes provides wrong information or the people do not understand what is being said, so they end up doing the wrong thing. The court process is very overwhelming.

Expedition & Timely Disposition:

In Washoe County, most judicial officer respondents, 7 of 9 responded to a yes/no question that yes the family division operates under specific case processing timeliness requirements that exceed statute requirements at times and could comment (based on their experience, in their department) on the points of friction where delays are most likely to occur. In Clark County, most respondents (19 of 29 or 66%) felt like the division did not operate under goals that were more stringent than statute minimums.

In Washoe County, about one-third of stakeholders think the family division does a lot or a great deal to promote timely case disposition, about one-third think they do a moderate amount and about one-third

think the division does not at all or just a little (Table 13). In Clark County, over one-third of stakeholder respondents indicated the family division does a lot or a great deal to promote timely case disposition.

Table 13: Based on your experience working in Nevada family courts, to what extent does the family court dispose of cases in a timely manner?													
	Not At All		A Little		Moderately		A Lot		A Great Deal		Unsure	Total	
Washoe stakeholders	9.5%	6	19.05%	12	33.3%	21	17.5%	11	12.7%	8	7.9%	5	63
Clark stakeholders	3.3%	1	16.67%	5	26.7%	8	6.7%	2	33.3%	10	13.3%	4	30

Nevada Family Court Assessment Stakeholder Survey.

Selected comments across jurisdictions include:

- We need statewide standardized court orders for every area of practice. We also need statewide standardized forms. If we achieved these goals, litigation would be more expeditiously resolved, orders would be entered immediately, pleadings would be complete and transferable, and stakeholders would be able to read orders with greater ease and familiarity.
- An additional case management specialist tasked with early intervention in self-represented cases would help streamline the process greatly.
- More judges to lower the caseload. It is difficult to do a good job without the time to think through an issue.
- Information technology improvements and additional resources to assist with service of process.
- Settlement conference judges to hear simple cases or to mediate a settlement before trial.
- Attorneys to help self-represented litigants understand their rights and in preparing documents.
- Most cases are resolved through non-adversarial methods. Those that do not resolve that way tend to take longer. Not only in getting to the trial phase, but also in obtaining a final order simply because of the resources needed.
- It really depends on the case. Most seem to run fairly efficiently, from filing to case management conference, to mediation (if children are involved), to settlement conference, to trial. That can take a year, but complex matters take time.
- Some departments are considerably more efficient than others. It depends on the department. However, all of the departments are burdened with significant caseloads, some just manage them more effectively.
- All parties work very hard to make sure cases are disposed of quickly in juvenile delinquency.
- They often do their best, but they are sometimes very slow with orders in legal issues, and sometimes things seem to get lost.
- Nothing is settled in a timely manner.
- Most Judges try and resolve the cases in a reasonable amount of time, however, there are some that are too complicated and take longer than most.

Judicial officers were asked in yes/no format if they feel like their respective family divisions have procedures to differentiate complex and simple cases in an effort to expedite case processing. In both counties, more than two-thirds of judicial officers responded that such efforts are made.

Selected comments across jurisdictions include:

- Every week, an uncontested termination of parental rights docket for the initial hearing is set in 30 increments to dispose of uncontested matters quickly rather than setting cases wherever there is space. The stakeholders know there is a set time each week. We also have two days a week set aside for full-day trials.
- Domestic violence cases involving custody of minor children are set for expedited hearing.
- Certain case types have a rush order designation.
- With simple cases, I am very proactive and at initial court hearings will explore agreements on as many issues as possible, often resulting in a full resolution.
- Complex cases will have more frequent hearings, status checks, and supervision by the court to ensure they are not allowed to lag. Less complex cases go to mediation or can be resolved at the case management conference.
- The caseload requires matters to be set for hearing four months out. This is too long.
- Our hearings are stacked oftentimes and happen very quickly. There isn't enough time to give each case the individual attention and hearing time the parents and children deserve.
- The caseload is such that it does not allow the Court to spend the time necessary to focus the time and attention to detail which is often necessary in many cases.
- If the court were able to focus more time at the beginning of a case (or mediator or facilitator is able to spend time), many of the matters would settle sooner, rather than languishing in the system for months due to the court's burdensome caseload.
- Hearing masters for juvenile delinquency usually hear over 100 cases per week. This leaves little time to spend with the families to determine all the issues.

When stakeholders were asked to what extent does your agency experience resource limitations that limit the effectiveness of the family division operating model, about 1 in 5 respondents in both jurisdictions indicated that their agency limitations impact the family division model a great deal and another 1 in 5 were unsure (Table 14). A greater proportion of stakeholders in Washoe think their agency resource limitations impact how the family division operated not at all or a little than did Clark County respondents.

Table 14: To what extent does your agency experience resource limitations that may limit the effectiveness of the family court?													
	Not at All		A Little		Moderately		A Lot		A Great Deal		Unsure		Total
Washoe stakeholders	10.0%	6	23.3%	14	16.7%	10	11.7%	7	20.0%	12	18.33%	11	60
Clark stakeholders	6.5%	2	16.1%	5	19.4%	6	19.4%	6	19.4%	6	19.35%	6	31

Nevada Family Court Assessment Stakeholder Survey.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- An inadequate number of judges cripples the entire process.
- Sadly, as a private attorney, these delays often work to drive up costs. As litigants wait for 3-4 months to be in front of [a] judge for the first time, issues arise. This means more motions and litigation. This drives up costs.
- No resources in [the] community for placement of individuals.
- We have numerous resources and knowledgeable attorneys.
- Department calendars are extremely full, which delays timeliness in setting and completing work.
- Although there is an additional judge starting in 2020 (Department 16), a court master position was removed.
- The number of hearings heard by all judicial officers in family court is very high, therefore, the number of cases processed by family court staff is very high.
- It would be nice to see the family court judges given the ability to use CASA workers (or something similar) to assist in meeting with the parents and ascertaining the child's best interests.
- There seems to be a link between the children in juvenile court proceedings and the families in domestic proceedings. I often wonder if there would be less children in the juvenile court if the domestic judges were given resources like I suspect the juvenile judges have to address the family conflicts and problems that are revealed during the family court proceedings and are usually linked to a child ending up in the juvenile court system.
- There does not seem to be an emphasis on evidence-based resources, and reliance on resource partners that have historically been in place. Effectiveness of the active resources does not seem to be a factor.

Judicial officers and stakeholders were asked in yes/no format if judicial officers within their respective family divisions exercise a leadership role in the community advocating for needed disposition resources for youth and families involved in delinquency proceedings. In Washoe County, 6 of the 9 judicial officer respondents indicated that judges exercise a leadership role in advocating for needed disposition resources in juvenile delinquency cases. Among stakeholders, about half could comment and half were unsure about this topic. Among those stakeholders who were familiar with the topic, about 71% feel like the judges exercise leadership in the community for addressing needed disposition resources for youth and families in delinquency cases.

In Clark County, 10 judicial officer respondents indicated familiarity with the topic/case type and all of them felt like the family division judges exercise a leadership role in the community advocating for needed delinquency disposition resources. Among Clark County stakeholders, 26 respondents out of 48 overall were in a position to respond. Among these 26 stakeholders, about 73% felt that the family

division judges are advocates in the community for addressing resource gaps for delinquent youth and their families.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- These are resources in which we are sorely lacking. It frustrates me to no end. We sent many of our youth to other states for treatment because we lack them in our community.
- Girls got and still get the short end of programming.
- Yes, but the services became fewer and fewer.
- Our judges do advocate for additional services. However, I think our judges can play a larger role in advocating for these services.
- Again, this is sometimes and it depends on the judicial officer. There are a couple who are extremely involved but there are a few who do not appear to be as involved in the community.
- My impression is that the family court judges are so inundated with work that they have very little time to lead advocacy for needed disposition resources.
- But this is limited by their heavy caseloads. Every time a judge makes a community appearance during the workday, that is time away from their court. We expect our judges to adjudicate, but they must also campaign and fund raise; we are exhausting and burning out our judges.
- Only a handful do compared to how many are on the bench.
- I see in press releases where all Judges are advocating for families and that dynamic.
- The juvenile court judge has advocated for services and has taken a strong leadership role, however, I am not so sure about other family court judges.

The stakeholder survey asked a yes/ no question concerning judicial oversight of hearing continuance requests. In Washoe County, over two-thirds (68%) of stakeholder respondents felt that the family division generally limits the circumstances in which hearing continuances may be granted. The judicial officer survey asked the question specifically within the context of child abuse/neglect cases. All of the respondents who have experience in this area indicated that the family division limits the circumstances in which hearing continuances are granted.

In Clark County, about one-third of stakeholders (32%) felt like the family division generally limits the circumstance in which hearing continuances are granted and under one-third indicated that the family division does not limit continuances. Over one-third (39%) of stakeholders are unsure. Among judicial officers, the question was framed specifically in the context of continuance control in child abuse/neglect cases. Among 11 respondents indicating experience in this case type, about 82% felt like the family division limits circumstances in which continuances are granted.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- Statutorily, we have specific timelines for the hearings [child abuse/neglect]. Going past the timelines requires a good cause finding, which is rarely granted and usually only once.

- While we have had numerous training sessions on the importance of resolving cases within the timeframe guidelines and the need to limit continuances [child abuse/neglect], each judicial essentially uses their own discretion in granting/denying continuances.
- While we want to get to court faster in most cases, I feel like if a continuance is needed, and there is good cause, it should be granted.
- A (normal) lawyer does not just ask for this for nothing. I think the courts should defer, where appropriate, to the lawyers when they seek to continue. Officer essentially uses their own discretion in granting/denying continuances.
- I have not seen continuances for no good reason routinely granted. Rather, I have seen continuances denied, and properly so.
- I think we all recognize that a continuance generally adds 90-120 days to a matter. I have requested one in the past year, and have encountered 2-3 from opposing counsel during that time.
- Continuances tend to be unusual.
- Our local rules state that continuances need to be granted only in the presence of good cause. Our department has been pretty good about enforcing this.
- Requests for continuances are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Depending on if you are [self-represented] or have an attorney will usually determine if a continuance is granted.
- Depends on the situation, if the court is setting the matter for a trial, it will usually do so at that time and allow the parties time to address and try and resolve their issues prior to trial. However, there are extenuating circumstances that warrant a continuance [be] granted. So I do not believe circumstances are limited, it just depends.

The stakeholders were also asked a yes/no question concerning the timely distribution of court orders. In Washoe County, 60% of 63 stakeholder respondents indicated that in their experience that judicial orders are distributed in a timely manner (across case types). The judicial officer survey asked the question specifically within the context of child abuse/neglect cases. Six of nine judicial officers indicated experience with this case type. Five of nine respondents indicated that orders are typically distributed at the conclusion of the hearings they have experience with.

In Clark County, about two-thirds of stakeholder respondents indicated that the family division generally distributes court orders in a timely manner to parties on a case. However, another one-third were unsure and 17 respondents skipped the question. Among judicial officers, and specific to child abuse/neglect case types, 10 respondents indicated experience with child abuse/neglect cases. Four of the 10 indicated that orders are generally distributed directly after the hearing, 2 indicated within a week, and 4 provided comments indicating that the timing of the distribution of the orders depends on the complexity of the hearing phase, but that for routine hearings the court orders are distributed directly at the conclusion of the hearing.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- In our Preliminary Hearing Calendar [child abuse/neglect], we provide at least 50% if not more of our orders to litigants out of court. The remainder are completed in no more than a week. Other orders are completed promptly, within a month at most. A few substantive orders are largely completed within 60 days. A minor few take longer based on workload.
- Our judges typically rule from the bench and require the attorneys to draft the order in a timely manner. Some delays occur when the attorneys cannot agree on the language of the final order.
- Some orders are quickly filed. Other orders languish. There's no logic to it.
- They are generally issued under the 60-day rule, but sometimes they take 90 to get out, which I partially blame on the 25% increase of caseload.
- The more time the judge sets aside to be on the bench and hear cases, the less time they have to write the orders taken under submission.
- The family court judges are really impacted by the volume of cases they are handling. They, I am sure are doing the best they can. There have been delays.
- Directly at the hearing [child abuse/neglect] unless a matter is taken under advisement with a written order issued thereafter.
- Routine orders [child abuse/neglect] are produced on the bench and distributed at the conclusion of the hearing. Decisions after adjudicatory trials are produced within a week. Decisions after termination of parental rights trials are produced within 30 days.
- It depends. Due to high caseloads, a family court judicial department is typically flooded with an exorbitant amount of orders for review and signature. The timeliness of distributing orders is greatly linked to the volume of orders a judicial department receives.
- The court does an excellent job with this.
- Juvenile delinquency matter orders are generally done in a timely manner. I am not sure of the other aspects of family court.
- This depends on how the docket is managed: some judicial officers draft their own orders and findings of facts, conclusions of law and orders rather than directing one of the parties to draft the order. When the judicial officer drafts his/her own orders, this exponentially speeds up the process of getting the orders in. Waiting for orders and, oftentimes receiving competing orders, results in gross inefficiency. Additionally, some judicial officers do their own writing while other judicial officers rely heavily on their law clerks for the drafting of such orders.

Equity, Fairness, and Integrity

In Washoe County more than half of the judicial officer respondents, 5 of 9, indicated that local court rules are consistently applied within the family division, either a lot or a great deal. About two-thirds of stakeholders also indicated a high level of consistency following court rules (Table 15).

A greater proportion of Clark County respondents (over two-thirds) indicated the local court rules were consistently applied across departments either a lot or a great deal. About three-quarters of stakeholders that chose to respond to the question (19 skipped it) were in agreement that the local court rules for family division operations are followed either a lot or a great deal.

Table 15: To what extent do you believe local court rules are followed?													
	Not at All		A Little		Moderately		A Lot		A Great Deal		Unsure		Total
Washoe judicial	0.0%	0	33.3%	3	11.1%	1	55.6%	5	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	9
Washoe stakeholders	3.2%	2	12.9%	8	12.9%	8	56.5%	35	8.1%	5	6.5%	4	62
Clark judicial	0.0%	0	17.2%	5	17.2%	5	51.7%	15	13.8%	4	0.0%	0	29
Clark stakeholders	3.5%	1	6.9%	2	3.5%	1	44.8%	13	31.0%	9	10.3%	3	29

Sources: Nevada Family Court Assessment Judicial Officer Survey and the Nevada Family Court Assessment Stakeholder Survey.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- Some rules are out of date. The rules are currently being updated.
- [In dependency matters] the local court rules are often times impossible to comply with due to statutory requirements and time constraints.
- I always strive to follow and enforce the rules, but with [self-represented] litigants we are expected to afford a little latitude in certain areas, and I believe we are vested with the discretion to do so.
- Many of the rules and administrative orders are out of date. Some are even inconsistent with NV law. The court is currently working on amending the rules to bring them into current practice.
- We have some issues with our rules that need fixed, but by and large, they are followed where applicable. However, the judges do not always make [self-represented] litigants follow the rules and this is frustrating.
- The biggest issue is getting awareness of the orders or changes in processing cases, and distributing those announcements.
- All departments run differently depending on what they want and how things should be. Some follow the rules and orders to a tee, while others use it as a guideline.
- Depends on [the] judge.

In Washoe County, about all but one of the judicial officer respondents feel like cases are decided on the merit of facts (one respondent skipped the question) (Table 16). About 82% of stakeholder respondents indicated this is true either most of the time or all of the time.

In Clark County, all but one judicial officer that responded to the question indicated that cases are decided on facts either most or all of the time. About two-thirds of stakeholder respondents were in agreement with this assessment, but 19 skipped the question.

Table 16: To what extent do you believe cases are decided on the facts?

	Not Often		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		All of the Time		Unsure		Total
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
Washoe judicial	0.0%	0	12.5%	1	0.0%	0	25.0%	2	62.5%	5	0.0%	0	8
Washoe stakeholder	0.0%	0	1.6%	1	8.2%	5	65.6%	40	16.4%	10	8.2%	5	61
Clark judicial	3.7%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	55.6%	15	40.7%	11	0.0%	0	27
Clark stakeholder	0.0%	0	10.3%	3	3.5%	1	41.4%	12	24.1%	7	20.7%	6	29

Sources: Nevada Family Court Assessment Judicial Officer Survey and the Nevada Family Court Assessment Stakeholder Survey.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- The facts cannot be separated from decisions also based on the application of the law to the facts. In which case, I would say all of the time.
- I state I am unsure because trial[s] are so rare. Most cases settle at the settlement conference, which is not always based upon the facts, but rather a series of concessions, which may or may not be based upon what could be factually proven at trial.
- As opposed to what? Sometimes the judge sees the end they want to reach and work backward, but thankfully, this is rare. The real problem is judges taking a liking to one side or the other, and worse, showing it.
- Some of our judges refuse to let us put forth all the facts.
- Often times the family court judges do not decide cases on the law. It appears their decisions are [based] on their personal likes or dislikes.
- In my experience, the judge does not make a ruling absent the evidence and facts.
- Current legislatively decreed preferences and presumptions have made many judges lazy to addressing the relevant facts of a child's best interest in order to pursue a perception of equality between disputing adults.
- The reason for not selecting all of the time is when a judge may decide to rule on the presentation rather than hold an evidentiary proceeding which is very tempting when the calendar gets congested.
- Most cases settle, so cases are rarely decided on the facts.

Both the judicial officer and the stakeholder surveys asked a yes/no question concerning the coordinated family division model reducing the chances of conflicting judicial orders. In Washoe County two-thirds of judicial officer respondents (6 of 9) felt that the family division operating model reduces the chances of conflicting court orders being produced by separate judicial departments. Among Washoe County stakeholders, about half (52%) agreed that the family division models reduce the likelihood of conflicting orders.

About the same proportion (70%) in Clark County agreed that the family division reduces the likelihood that families in court will experience orders that are in conflict because of a more coordinated approach. Among stakeholders, about half (52%) agreed that the family division model reduces the likelihood of conflicting orders. However, 19 respondents skipped this question in Clark County.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- Judges are able to see orders in other cases and be aware to avoid conflicting orders.
- We do a good job of monitoring related cases to avoid conflicting decisions.
- Only through maintenance of the one-family-one-judge processing of cases. There is no consistency between judicial departments.
- Sometimes, but if there are confidential case types, then no.
- Just because a different family court judge is hearing a related family issue, does not mean that they are unaware of the other proceedings.
- Many of the related cases are heard by masters who cannot legally issue orders. So they have to go before at least two judicial officers anyway.
- [The court] could do a much better job enforcing the one-family-one-judge rule. Some judicial officers are more willing than others to ensure one family is assigned to one department. There is communication between departments who share cases for one family, but there are still conflicting court orders for families.
- Yes, if the one family/one judge rule is respected.
- In my experience, we have been pretty good regarding following the one-family-one judge rule. This has helped keep court orders from conflicting.
- The one-judge-one-family rule has helped this dramatically.
- The different goals and agendas of the differing courts often increase the likelihood of conflicting directions given to families.

Using a yes/no question structure, judicial officers in both of the counties think that they receive adequate judicial training to do their job effectively. In Washoe County, about two-thirds (6 of 9) of the judicial officers indicated that they are adequately trained to hear the cases they are assigned. Among stakeholder survey respondents, about half (53%) agreed that judges are adequately trained to hear the cases they are assigned. In contrast, about one-quarter of stakeholder respondents disagreed that judges are adequately trained, 23% were unsure, and 8 stakeholder respondents skipped the question.

Among Clark County judicial officer respondents, 79% (23 of 29) felt that they have adequate training support and 21% disagreed that judicial officers have adequate training. Among stakeholders, 69% agreed that judges and hearing masters are adequately trained to hear the cases they are assigned, 17% disagreed they are adequately trained, 14% were unsure and 19 stakeholder respondents skipped this question.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- The training that is needed to do the job effectively is not usually offered by the court itself. I look for judicial training on issues applicable to my docket and have to find the trainings myself. The court is very supportive of training and education and I have never been denied a request to participate in education.
- Other than on the job training, I have not had any training, due to coverage issues.
- Attending relevant training more than 1[time] per year [is] virtually impossible because of the coverage issue it creates. We need a much better coverage system in place for the masters, period.
- It would be helpful to have a review program such as assigning a senior judge(s) to randomly sit in and/or review video of judicial performance and provide constructive criticism.
- Hearing masters are permitted to attend a limited number of CLEs per year if the budget permits... judges attend many statewide or jurisdiction summits. Hearing masters are not invited.
- Trauma-informed care, LQBT.
- They should be cross-trained so that when cases are transferred, or someone is covering, cases are processed efficiently and orders are consistent.
- Domestic violence training is critical, on multiple levels. The cycle of domestic violence and how many times on average a victim tries to get out before they eventually do.
- New judges and masters need new training.
- Best practices and current trends for the cases they are hearing. Trauma-informed care, adolescent brain development.
- Some hearing masters place kids on probation for low-level offenses, youth are still being detained for low-risk offenses.

Both surveys applied a yes/no question format to ask whether the family division judicial officers have adequate resources to do their jobs well (e.g., technology or adequate courtroom support staff). More than half of judicial and stakeholder respondents in both of the counties felt like they are adequately supported to operate their respective departments.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- I have mentioned case management specialists. We could use some more and also more clerks to ensure that court minutes and orders are processed more quickly.
- It may be helpful to have drop-down menus that could be used in the courtroom, which would also generate formatted orders.
- The technology for video conferencing is somewhat lacking and could be better.
- [The] court provided laptops to be able to work from home on evenings/weekends.
- More robust automated record system, which allows more standardized and ad hoc reports incorporating multiple fields of information.
- We are working on automated orders, our compliance screening was recently fixed so it is getting better. Voice recognition software to use in filling auto orders would be beneficial, a system that could timely resolve cases wrongfully assigned is needed.
- Our caseloads can be overwhelming. Additional court staff is necessary to support the extraordinary caseloads.

- When I started with the court twenty years ago, each department had two court clerks assigned to each department. This facilitated the docket management, improved the time needed to review and approve orders from hearings.
- The primary problem that I see is that the judges are overwhelmed by the size of their dockets.
- Video appearance capability for adults in guardianship court, that is accessible from facilities throughout our region and out of state.
- Judges do have enough to be effective, but there is room for improvement, especially on the technology side.
- I would like to see a greater investment in case management software.
- Our courts do not have the capability to have parties or witnesses appear by electronic video means.
- Judicial departments are in need of additional staff to manage large caseloads, high volume.

Finally, both surveys asked a yes/no question concerning the adequacy of the space and condition in the respective primary family division court facilities. In Washoe County, only 2 of 9 judicial officers felt that the family division court facility is adequate for them to do their job effectively. The remainder indicated no or had specific comments about facility inadequacies. Washoe stakeholders were divided nearly 50/50 in either responding that the facility has adequate space.

In Clark County, about two-thirds of judicial officer respondents felt that the court facility is of adequate size to do their jobs effectively. About half (52%) of Clark County stakeholders responding to this question felt that the facility is inadequate, and about 41% think it is adequate. The remaining 7% were unsure.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- We have no conference room. No room for additional judges.
- It would be great to have child-friendly interview rooms and rooms for counsel to speak privately with their clients rather than in separate corners of the waiting room. We also do not have room to add more judges or courtrooms.
- We could use more courtrooms and attorney/client rooms and better internet access.
- As of now, we have adequate space. I do wonder where the new department will be housed beginning in 2021.
- The dockets for family court judges are higher than the dockets for general jurisdiction judges. The family court needs more judges and departments. The current building would not accommodate additional needed judges.
- Yes, the space is adequate. It will not be adequate when a new department is added in 2021.
- No, there are judicial officers located in [an] outbuilding, and courtroom sharing is normal.
- Our building is falling apart, stinks, air vents are jam-packed with grime and dust, [and] constantly have leaks when it rains or when pipes break.
- Family court building built in 1994, Clark County now has over 2 million citizens.
- The family division courthouse is old and unpleasant. Courthouses should be located in a central place for the benefit of attorneys working multiple cases in a single day and so that litigants can access all court-related services in an efficient manner.

- Court staff should have private offices to include the [judicial assistant] and law clerk as is the case at the Regional Justice Center.
- Phone calls are often of a sensitive nature and the bullpen style of the working conditions at the Pecos/Bonanza courthouse makes [privacy] nearly impossible. Additionally, quiet is at a premium for all who are working. Additional bathrooms would be nice for both the staff and the judges.
- Many modifications have been made to the family court facility to make it more efficient assisting the public.
- This facility is run down and in need of many upgrades.
- Not adequate space with 6 new judges coming.
- Courtrooms are spread throughout the building and it can often be crowded and confusing for the public. Office space is at a premium for most of the county entities residing in the building, and there is no room for expansion and growth.

Independence and Accountability

Both the judicial officer and the stakeholder surveys asked a yes/no format question concerning access to services. In Washoe County, less than one-quarter of judicial officers felt that the family division has access to adequate services to meet the needs of families in court. Among stakeholders the proportion was similar. Only 29% of respondents felt that there are adequate services in the community available to families in court.

In Clark County, one-third of respondents indicated that the family division has access to adequate support services to meet the needs of families in court. A smaller proportion of stakeholders (27%) felt that families in court have the services they need in the community.

Respondents in both jurisdictions and across survey respondent pools provided extensive examples for specific service gaps.

- There is a dearth of support services for children and families in this community.
- Children with disabilities are often under-served outside of the school system with supplemental support such as counseling, home care support, caretaker relief, tutoring availability, and respite services.
- Diversionary pro-social programs for children are present but not to a sufficient degree to provide healthy intervention into the lives of most children.
- Additional mental health services for both children and parents are necessary.
- Parents need access to more services related to assistance with mental health and substance abuse issues.
- Parents need housing and transportation assistance.
- The families need more counseling resources, including access to timely psychological and psychiatric evaluations.
- It is not so much additional services as additional service providers.
- Access to social workers to assess and make necessary referrals for monetary benefits and public and private assistance programs, mental health/counseling/therapy, addiction recovery,

physical health/immunizations, disabled services, transportation, education, job/employment programs.

- Many families are struggling with mental health issues. There simply are not any services available to support these families in crisis.
- We need more in-patient beds for parents with substance abuse issues. We need better programs for parents who have physically abused their child. We need better evaluations on an abusive parent's likelihood to re-offend. We need greater funding for housing for parents who have had children removed based upon a lack of adequate resources. We need more shelter beds for victims of domestic abuse.
- Services are typically utilized by delinquency and dependency case types and unavailable for civil domestic case types.
- There is inadequate access to behavioral health services; living wage jobs; childcare; transportation; safe affordable housing for families to name a few.
- There are not enough judges to handle the caseload.
- We need additional Spanish interpreters and translators. Utilizing Voiance is an option but it would be better to have a live interpreter.
- Some assistance for our patrons for transportation and parking would be excellent. Additional staff is needed in both the Filing Office and the Protection Order Help Center.
- Litigants must even pay for their own drug tests. No funds for drug treatment and mental health treatment in custody/divorce cases.
- Social workers or other support personnel to advocate for family engagement in the system.

The judicial officer survey asked a yes/no question concerning the availability of caseflow performance reports. In Washoe County, about two-thirds of the judicial officers thought that they receive information on a regular basis that uses data to measure their performance on case processing goals and timelines. In Clark County judicial officers also indicated receiving caseflow management reports. Similar proportions of respondents in both counties also indicated that information about effective case management practices is shared across departments.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- I can get gross percentage figures on meeting all timelines other than termination of parental rights, which recently moved from a separate case type to motion practice within the dependency case. I can't truly say if I have the ability to drill down in the report that we do receive (upon request) and am not sure if I can trust the accuracy of the report itself.
- What we receive is ill-suited to the task, some of the stats are easily manipulated through self-reporting.
- Yes, monthly case activity reports, we check them every month and try to get our numbers down it's a helpful tool, as well as daily filings reports [which are] computer generated and end up in our inbox on email.
- Yes, for the most part. We receive info as to how many open cases we each have. Plus, as mentioned, it is important to be vigilant that individual cases don't linger.

In Washoe County, over half of the judicial officer respondents (5 of 9) think that the family division strives to provide a child-friendly environment with features such as comfortable waiting areas, clean facilities and amenities like infant/childcare (Table 17). Others think that moderate attempts are made to meet these needs. In Clark County, judicial officers were less likely to think their family division is making strides with child-sensitive environments. About 20% (6 of 28) respondents felt like the court does a lot or a great deal on this topic and a substantial proportion felt like they do little to nothing at all.

Table 17: Based on your experience in Nevada family courts, to what extent does the family court in your judicial district provide a family and child-friendly environment (e.g., comfortable waiting areas, clean facilities, infant/childcare, etc.)?

	Not At All		A Little		Moderately		A Lot		A Great Deal		Unsure		Total
Washoe judicial	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	44.4%	4	22.2%	2	33.3%	3	0.0%	0	9
Washoe stakeholders	0.0%	0	16.1%	10	25.8%	16	24.2%	15	33.9%	21	0.0%	0	62
Clark judicial	28.6%	8	17.9%	5	32.1%	9	17.9%	5	3.6%	1	0.0%	0	28
Clark stakeholders	28.6%	8	10.7%	3	32.1%	9	10.7%	3	14.3%	4	3.6%	1	28

Sources: Nevada Family Court Assessment Judicial Officer Survey and the Nevada Family Court Assessment Stakeholder Survey.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- We attempt to be as comforting, stress-free, and as user-friendly as reasonably possible. However, within the call of the question, there are services not yet available, at least not to my knowledge (e.g. free on-site childcare services and the like)
- When our current building was first opened it had an employee and public cafeteria and open lobbies which allowed for [the] separation of litigants. The cafeteria was converted into courtrooms and the public lobby was filled with meeting tables.
- We could use childcare or at least a child-friendly waiting area.
- Parents are prohibited from bringing their children to Court, but they often do. We have to reschedule their hearings because we cannot accommodate any childcare.
- Parties are in the same, short hallway even if there are protective orders or high conflict. We have two small ante-chambers but they are often not accessible because they are being used. I feel this is inadequate.

Public Trust and Confidence

In Washoe County, judicial officers indicated that they are involved in the community at a high level (reporting either a lot or a great deal) with public education, building relationships with stakeholders, and building relationships with service provider networks (Table 18).

In Clark County, judicial officer respondents reported less community engagement. However, more than a quarter responded being involved in public education either a lot or a great deal and more than one-third reported being involved in building relationships with system stakeholders and service provider networks at a similarly high level. Collectively the survey results indicate the family division may be helping to promote judicial leadership within the community.

		None at All		A Little		Moderately		A Lot		A Great Deal		Total
Washoe judicial	Public education	0.0%	0	11.1%	1	44.4%	4	33.3%	3	11.1%	1	9
	Build relationships with stakeholders	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	55.6%	5	44.4%	4	9
	Build relationships with service providers	0.0%	0	11.1%	1	0.0%	0	66.7%	6	22.2%	2	9
Clark judicial	Public education	14.8%	4	22.2%	6	33.3%	9	25.9%	7	3.7%	1	27
	Build relationships with stakeholders	0.0%	0	25.9%	7	33.3%	9	29.6%	8	11.1%	3	27
	Build relationships with service providers	0.0%	0	29.6%	8	33.3%	9	25.9%	7	11.1%	3	27

Sources: Nevada Family Court Assessment Judicial Officer Survey.

Both the judicial officer and the stakeholder surveys asked a yes/no question about formalized methods for youth and families in court to provide feedback on their experiences. In Washoe County, most judicial officers (7 of 9) indicated that there is no formal pathway for family input, or if there is, they are unaware of the procedures or forum. About two-thirds of Washoe County stakeholders agreed that there is no formalized method to provide feedback, but provided some important qualifiers listed below.

In Clark County, 80% of judicial respondents indicated there are no formal methods for youth and families to engage the court regarding their experiences. About two-thirds of stakeholders agreed nothing formal exists. Based on these results, this is an area for improvement in both jurisdictions.

Selected comments across jurisdictions and respondent groups include:

- Unknown whether formalized method; however, court administration is open and receptive to feedback from litigants.
- I am aware there are complaint forms that can be filled out and given to court administration but I think [are] rarely used.
- The family mediation center and the family self-help center provide surveys to court users to provide feedback concerning their experience with these programs.
- It has been some time since there has been a public survey concerning court experiences in general.

- A system similar to that used to rate Supreme Court settlement judges would be very beneficial. It should be completed by litigants and counsel at the conclusion of their case.
- I think we had a survey table done once a few years ago where departing families had an opportunity to provide feedback, but I was not involved and don't recall the details.
- Customer feedback forms are available for both complaints and comments.
- They come to the third floor and are able to provide a feedback form or speak with our staff attorney who will formalize the feedback as well.
- Family feedback would be key and greatly needed to improve the experience.

Within the stakeholder survey, respondents were invited to provide further comments about the communication between their agency and the family division court. In Washoe County, about two-thirds of stakeholder respondents (39 of 62) indicated that there is no method. About the same proportion also responded that there is no formalized feedback communication path, but in both surveys respondents had some important comments. Selected examples include:

- Washoe County Bar Association has the annual survey of judges. We also have quarterly bench/ bar meetings, and the judges overall are approachable and more or less willing to hear feedback from counsel.
- We have a small bar. They know most of us, and attend functions, meetings, etc., with the lawyers who appear before them. That is not a formal feedback method, but it is important nevertheless.
- There is a complaint/suggestion box.
- Aside from complaints or concerns addressed directly with the presiding judge, there is not an actual formal method for staff to provide feedback unless specifically solicited for it via email.

Survey Theme Summary

The overall survey results indicate that the family division operating model has some strengths but is also experiencing some challenges in specific areas. Among the strengths there is agreement among judicial officers that the family division operating model supports commonly accepted goals of Access to Justice; Expeditious and Timely Disposition; Equity, Fairness and Integrity; Independence and Accountability; and Public Trust and Confidence. There is also general support for the family division case coordination goal with some disagreement concerning how and to what extent it is accomplished. Respondents in both jurisdictions had strong opinions on what resources are required to increase coordination. Finally, most judicial officer and stakeholder respondents believe the family division operating model encourages the use of alternative dispute resolution methods.

Highlights of the specific challenges included:

- Survey respondents in both jurisdictions are concerned about the space limitations in their respective facilities limiting activities that support the family division operating model.

- Judicial officers think that the family division works to reduce the costs to families in court but stakeholders believe more can be done.
- Access to legal resources and information appears to be an operating strength of both jurisdictions, but the judicial officer and stakeholder respondents have specific suggestions for improvement.
- Both divisions are generally advancing activities to support timely case processing, but respondents have many specific observations about where there is room for improvements.
- Access to adequate levels of social services was a theme in both jurisdictions and there was a strong response with specific examples of service gaps.
- Examples of specific judicial officers engaged in leadership and community outreach exist in both jurisdictions but caseload demands limit the ability to accommodate this role.
- There may be no consistent forum or procedure for families in court to provide feedback about their experiences in the respective family division courts.

Interview Themes

NCJJ staff conducted a 3-day site visit to the Washoe County Family Division on June 5-7, 2019, and a similar site visit to the Clark County Family Division on June 24-26. Court administrators assisted NCJJ in developing an ambitious 2-track interview schedule. One track focused on a broad range of judges, attorneys, family division staff, court program administrators, and representatives whose work is centered in domestic relations case types (i.e., adult/civil). The second track focused on those assigned to or working closely with the child abuse/neglect and juvenile justice areas. One NCJJ researcher primarily managed the domestic relations track and was accompanied by an attorney from the NCJFCJ main office, and one NCJFCJ researcher conducted all the juvenile justice and child abuse/neglect track interviews. The study team interviewed 60 individuals across Washoe and Clark counties. A list of interview participants from each of the 3-day visits is provided in Appendix A.

The purpose of the on-site interviews was to explore the themes gleaned from the surveys in greater depth. The interview schedule that was used in Washoe County differed slightly in structure from the one used in Clark County later in the month. The differences reflect refinements that were noted as useful during the Washoe County trip. The final interview protocol is included in Appendix B and is a starting place for subsequent updates or future self-assessments.

Interview subjects in each jurisdiction indicated that, overall, the courts are advancing the five goals of the coordinated family divisions, consistent with the responses to the judicial and stakeholder surveys. Findings from the interviews, including perceived strengths and areas in which challenges and/or opportunities remain, are integrated into this report section.

Access to Justice

Washoe County

The Washoe County Family Division's efforts are generally held in high regard by stakeholders interviewed during site visits. Several interview subjects characterized the self-help center and the family division's website as excellent. Language services were generally viewed as a strength within the overall district court. In juvenile matters, the family division appoints counsel to parties in all cases. Court administration support to the family division covers the entire district court (i.e., not specialized to divisions). This policy is intentional and aimed at supporting an image of equity in status between the general division and the family division. NCJJ noted a high level of attention among judicial officers and court administrators toward balancing the needs of the family division with those of the general division of the trial court. With limited resources, there will always be competing demands, but overall, interview subjects provided examples of collaboration and mutual support, such as general division judges temporarily assisting when the division was experiencing unacceptable delays when there was a vacant judge position. Interview subjects also noted that when additional positions in Washoe County have been allocated to the family division, they have been prioritized and assigned to address increasing caseloads (often in juvenile and family case types).

Interview subjects noted the family division's application of alternative dispute resolution as a strength. This is consistent with the survey findings. The recent support from the state Court Improvement Project to pilot and evaluate dependency mediation was frequently cited as a specific example, as were the mandatory mediation, case management conference, and senior judge settlement conference procedure in divorce and custody matters. Some interview respondents expressed interest in expanding ADR into new areas that may include victim-offender mediation in delinquency or property settlement in divorce and custody, if suitable resources can be provided.

The primary challenges noted in Washoe County most often revolved around navigating facility inadequacies that have caused some fragmentation of and/or logistical issues for the family division and its key partners. Achieving greater procedural consistency across courtrooms was also mentioned by a number of interview participants as an ongoing challenge. A number of stakeholders indicated that differences in procedures in different courtrooms can pose important challenges in terms of case preparation and courtroom practices.

The lack of on-site childcare was raised by interview subjects who are concerned about the enormous impact the lack of this programming presents to families in court who must take time off of work and incur expenses that add greatly to their stress to attend court proceedings.

A recurring theme among interview subjects under access to justice was the need to align operations toward the majority of the domestic relations clients that are self-represented, with moderate to low incomes. Some respondents suggested that clients of private lawyers in divorce/custody matters are more likely to receive a timely response than are self-represented parties.

Clark County

Family division court administration is specialized in Clark County and differs in this regard from the Washoe County structure. Like Washoe County, there is a theme among subjects interviewed of general respect for the family division, including its efforts to improve access to the court.

In discussing ongoing challenges, one important factor in Clark County is the distance between family division court facilities. Interview participants emphasized how this distance (and separation) can inhibit timely access and present logistical obstacles (e.g., parking), particularly for the public and key stakeholders who may have overlapping court actions occurring at different, distant locations.

Clark County interview subjects often referred to court facility limitations, such as the lack of space for new courtrooms and judicial chambers and adequate space for key programmatic areas that should be features of a coordinated family division (e.g., on-site infant/childcare, separate victim waiting areas). Despite these constraints, interview subjects often referenced the e-filing and new auto-accept procedure, live-file for temporary protection orders, and advanced video hearing equipment as key improvements utilizing technology to reduce the strain on an antiquated court facility. They also acknowledged the recent efforts of court leadership/administration to re-locate and expand the area allocated for legal information and temporary emergency order triage. This renovation is occurring in a space near the entrance/exit of the Pecos facility. However, some participants doubt it will be large enough and that safety concerns will remain a prominent challenge. Some concern exists that the crowded conditions and the limitations on building out spaces create safety concerns that create a volatile situation that could erupt on any given day.

The dilemma of the space situation, coupled with the need for convenient, modern, 24/7 access to emergency relief or to accommodate work schedules in routine matters, is viewed as a priority and one that the family division is making efforts to address with technology. The Tyler Technologies guided-file-online temporary protection order (TPO) application is a prime example of the innovation that the pressure of the current chaotic facility environment is helping to inspire. An online dispute resolution (ODR) application for custody/divorce that was implemented in January 2018 is also well received by clients of the court, helping about half resolve their cases. Like Washoe County, the information technology support to the family division in Clark County is well respected, innovative, and fluent with a

proprietary Tyler Technologies data system (Tyler-Odyssey) that interview subjects suggest is well-equipped to support the needs of the family division.

As indicated in Washoe County, interview subjects in Clark County emphasized that access to ADR is an important resource for the family division, often mentioning abuse/neglect and termination of parental rights mediation, and that the procedures in divorce and custody for mandatory mediation/case management/settlement are key strengths. Translation service availability was noted as a barrier to increasing the accessibility to ADR in Clark County, as were procedures that expertly identify and address domestic violence dynamics.

In the juvenile justice area, interview subjects referenced the positive impacts of the proactive pre-charge diversion programs implemented and expanded by the Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS), as well as the family division diversion court.

Finally, the lack of on-site childcare for families in court was a concern raised by interview subjects for similar reasons that it is a theme in Washoe County (e.g., expense, stress). On-site childcare is among the first wish-list items in the vision for a new court facility, along with a plan for safer and more secure plan for judicial, staff and litigant pathways and flow in a new building (e.g., exits and entrances, secure areas, etc.)

Expeditious and Timely Disposition

Washoe County

In Washoe County, most interview subjects agreed that support for timely case processing is a strength of the court, particularly in the child welfare and juvenile justice areas. In the words of one interview participant, timeliness and delay reduction are built into our policies and practices. The court has strong collaborative partners in this regard across practitioners who, in other jurisdictions, may be more adversarial and less cooperative. In particular, interview subjects noted the exceptional collaborative efforts in dependency and delinquency matters. All of these stakeholders emphasized their shared commitments to making system responses in abuse/neglect and delinquency matters as timely as possible, though some respondents did indicate some concerns with the system moving too fast at times.

Overall, the court has good performance monitoring information to understand where delays occur at critical phases, such as at the termination of parental rights or adoption. Interview subjects noted that it is rare for the court to not adhere to statutory timeframes for case processing. Consistent with the survey findings, court orders in routine dependency hearings are frequently drafted in court and served at the

conclusion of hearings. Though at the review hearing stage, it is not the court that generates these orders, it is secretarial staff from the District Attorney's office.

Interview subjects noted that the child abuse/neglect and delinquency case types have strong statutory support for case processing timeliness, and the state court improvement program director at the AOC helps to provide oversight and support for promoting best practices in dependency matters. There have also been reform commissions and a CIP-supported dependency mediation program evaluation that have helped enhance key family division operations, particularly in the abuse/neglect realm. Dependency mediation was specifically noted as helping to address more timely permanency and case processing in child abuse and neglect cases.

On the delinquency side, the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) is a strong partner of the court in promoting and practicing timely diversion, intervention and other best practices, along with its abilities to maintain and produce exceptional case management and performance measurement data. However, interview subjects stated that these same supports do not exist in other case types, notably guardianship, divorce, and custody.

The volume of mental health (involuntary commitment hearings) is large in Washoe County and the court generally issues orders at the conclusion of the hearing or within 24 hours of the conclusion of the proceedings.

Clark County

In Clark County, most interview subjects agreed that the court receives good support for caseflow management performance and that growing workload demands are the most pressing challenges. During interviews, judicial officers could share caseflow management reports, and information technology brought a complete range of reports to the interview. A theme exists that with strong data and collaborative efforts great progress has been made with specific case types but the vigilance must be constant. For example, interview subjects shared that there has been a fairly recent and ongoing focus on court improvement in child abuse/neglect cases. The family division was a lead partner in the Clark County Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission (chaired by a Supreme Court Justice). Interview subjects indicated that there is a general recognition within the family division, regardless of a judicial officer's current assignment, that the abuse/neglect case type has stringent case processing requirements and must be closely managed for performance.

In both Washoe and Clark counties, there is an emphasis in the family divisions on making sure the resource requirements for cases involving children and youth do not take a secondary position to those of adults in domestic relations cases. In Clark County, efforts to produce and distribute court orders in the

courtroom at the conclusion of proceedings are evident in some courtrooms but there is a lack of consistency across courtrooms. There is support and interest in modeling a template in judicial departments that the court order technology has not been applied, such as in delinquency proceedings. Some interview subjects suggested that consistent approaches to court order generation is an important role for the AOC or a state commission to provide guidance. Currently, there is variation within the family divisions in Washoe and Clark counties and outside of them.

Equity, Fairness, and Integrity

Washoe County

In Washoe County, a consistent theme among interview subjects was the collaboration between court partners and the family division. The interview subjects provided specific examples of how the family division encourages and supports cross-system collaboration, particularly in child welfare and juvenile justice.

Having proximate access to the resources of the University of Nevada at Reno campus, the National Judicial College, and NCJFCJ was also a strength noted during some interviews. In the context of specific case types, judicial interview subjects often cited specific NCJFCJ training programs such as the annual Child Abuse and Neglect Institute and new family court judge training as resources that help promote equality, fairness, and integrity. While strong communication was a theme between district judges and the family bar, several interview subjects noted stakeholders are not always included in discussions about improvements that are directly within their wheelhouse. Some specific examples included meetings to discuss changes impacting hearing master dockets to which hearing masters were not invited (perhaps due to lack of coverage), changes that impact self-represented litigants to which no one from legal aid or the self-help center were invited, and discussions concerning the challenges of the mental health docket that did not include social services or community stakeholder agencies working with the mentally ill.

Another prominent theme cited during interviews is the communication modeled in the regular bench/bar meetings and annual judicial conferences. One experienced judicial officer observed that the Nevada Supreme Court Justices attend the annual juvenile and family law conferences and some typically stay for the duration. A judicial interviewee in a leadership position also complimented the value of the annual statistical reports produced by the Supreme Court and uses them on a continuous basis to orient and train staff.

The challenge of providing adequate ongoing training to all family division staff in the dynamics of domestic violence was raised by several interview subjects. They observed that judges, some masters,

mediators, clerk's office staff, self-help staff, and even supervised visitation staff had a lack of understanding of these issues, or expressed during their own interviews a need for training that is dangerous if it continues to be unmet.

A prominent challenge noted by some interview participants, and mirrored in survey results, is the role of hearing masters within the family division, their ongoing oversight by district judges, and their inclusion in judicial meetings and training programs. Hearing masters are assigned to high volume dockets and it is difficult for them to step away from packed hearing dockets to attend training. Some interview subjects characterized the hearing master position as one of the more high-stress positions within the family division and that it has some structural challenges for working optimally, such as judicial review of all hearing orders. New hearing master recruitment and training prior to assuming hearing responsibilities is an area that some interview subjects think can be improved, but they generally acknowledged overwhelming workloads presenting a challenge to a thorough orientation period. The family division has taken the step of assigning a specific judge to supervise the activity of each master and masters are involved in cross-training between case types.

One circumstance in Washoe County that involved the eventual removal of a new family division judge also prompted some comments regarding the court's commitment to equality, fairness, and integrity. In brief, this new judge did not meet the performance standards of the bench and was subsequently removed. A number of stakeholders remarked that this was an example of how committed the family division is to maintaining high standards of performance. However, the vacancy and the time required to fill this position had a negative impact on the ability of the remaining judicial officers to take the adequate time required in hearings to meet their internal standards, which are often state program or national best practice standards. It also had an impact on other court staff and stakeholders as workloads temporarily increased during this extended period. Judges assigned to the general division helped with trial calendars as needed until the position was filled, but the experience has left an important imprint across all those involved with the family division in Washoe County.

Crowded dockets and heavy caseloads were generally viewed as persistent challenges to fairness and integrity. Several judicial officer interview subjects and other stakeholders mentioned working over lunches, in the evenings, and over weekends. Most respondents characterized the family division courtrooms as extremely busy and in some instances overwhelmed with balancing docket demands. A range of stakeholders provided specific examples of unwieldy calendar sizes being the norm in recent years.

Interview subjects frequently referenced the family division clerk's work to organize related case information in electronic binders for each hearing day. The information technology department can assist but there is a great amount of work in hand-checking the queries and adding related cases to the electronic binders. The process is labor-intensive and there are periodic accuracy/quality control issues, but it allows the family division judges and masters to coordinate matters and it reduces the possibilities of conflicting orders that can impact the fairness and integrity of the court.

The family division in Washoe County is piloting case consolidation (i.e., all hearings before the same judge) for abuse/neglect and delinquency cases in the Project One court. While some interview subjects indicated some disagreement on the merits/benefits of automatic consolidation of all related cases before one judge, especially beyond dependency and delinquency cases, others indicated strong support to continue Project ONE. A recent initial assessment of Project One conducted by the NCJFCJ also found strong support across stakeholders for this case coordination model and promising process outcomes such as fewer placement changes, fewer hearing continuances, and timely DJS case closure.

In responses to questions involving broader family division matters (not just dependency and delinquency), interview subjects, including attorneys, generally valued the information gathered by the court about other proceedings (e.g., the electronic binders compiled by court clerks) but noted that some related matters have more relevance for coordination than other case types, and the family division judges are in a good position to triage and individualize coordination activities.

Some interview subjects noted that among the most useful cases to have knowledge about, particularly in relation to abuse/neglect and delinquency matters, are the adult criminal cases of parents. Much labor-intensive work is occurring to facilitate the compilation of accurate related case information in the family division, and it is sometimes subject to errors. However, Washoe County Family Division judges have more information than many of their colleagues nationally that work in judicial silos.

A progressive dialogue exists in the Washoe County jurisdiction regarding the goals of the automatic case assignment procedure, and selective case coordination with a specific-purpose tailored to individualized circumstances. Overall, a broad range of interview participants supported the efforts of the family division to meet the NRS goals of case coordination, and the effort to pilot integrated solutions such as Project ONE. In general, those working in the abuse/neglect and juvenile delinquency areas strongly support coordination for these two case types; whereas those working in the domestic relations area tend to support more selective communication between departments, coordination or consolidation when it advances timely and fair resolution of family cases, and the creation of binders that contain related case information. As these issues relate to the extent of information shared by the court with stakeholders,

some stakeholders indicated that the court should share even more information about related cases, as appropriate. Specifically, some respondents suggested there is a need to coordinate information from other, separate courts (e.g., justice, municipal, or other Nevada district courts) particularly around criminal domestic violence and other adult criminal cases that may require coordination or at least active communication with the other court.

Clark County

In Clark County, judicial workloads were also a prominent, recurring theme among judicial officers but also among most of the other stakeholders. For example, despite the increase in resources and the attention provided to the abuse/neglect docket in the Clark County, interview subjects provided anecdotal descriptions of afternoon dockets exceeding 20 hearings and running well past 5:00 p.m. almost every day. During interviews, some judicial officers indicated that the volume impacts the time available to prepare for and conduct substantive hearings, adversely affecting the family division's goals for fairness and integrity.

Similar to Washoe County, the role of hearing masters in judicial teams was an important theme in Clark County interviews. At the time of the June site visit, the family division had nine hearing masters. Three master positions were being replaced with new judicial position allocations (thus reducing the county-supported positions and the net gain of the additional state investment). Interview subjects were divided on supporting or opposing the use of hearing masters, and facility limitations for creating additional courtrooms are likely to have been somewhat of a factor in the decisions. The boundaries and differences in authority between the district judges and the hearing masters were a theme in some interviews, and training opportunities for hearing masters were raised as a challenge for some of the same reasons they were in Washoe County.

The theme of inadequate domestic violence training for all family division staff and the danger this unmet need poses that was present for Washoe County is a similar theme among Clark County interview subjects.

The family division in Clark County is piloting case consolidation (i.e., all hearings before the same judge) with the automatic judicial assignment at e-filing called 1 Judge/1 Family (1J/1F) (reversing the more recognized phrasing one-family-one-judge). The procedure is new and the court was only 3 months into implementation during the time of interviews. Interview subjects were mixed in their responses concerning whether the auto-assign is happening and whether it will improve the equity, fairness, and integrity for the family division. An important side benefit to the innovation is the information technology (IT) department's ability to generate metrics concerning the overall inter-relatedness of family division

cases by case type. During the study, family division IT provide NCJJ with example by abuse/neglect; delinquency; temporary protection orders; divorces with children and divorces without children (Appendix C). This was the first time IT had compiled summary data concerning the probability of past or current related cases for specific samples of filings and what types of related cases these are most likely to be. Having the ability to draw this level of information, helps to quantify the need for a coordinated family division model in Nevada, confirm which case types are most likely to have inter-related cases, and will help the family division in Clark County be able to plan for how to optimally consolidate matters under 1J/1F. The Clark County Family Division is the first coordinated family division model court that NCJJ has documented being able to produce preliminary related-case probability statistics. Interviews suggest that Washoe County is on the verge of having similar capabilities.

Independence and Accountability

Washoe County

In Washoe County, interview subjects provided observations along the lines of regular, ongoing communication being a standard of the family division, citing monthly judicial meetings and regular meetings between supervising judges and hearing masters.

Active ongoing judicial participation in child abuse and neglect court improvement was noted as a strength by stakeholders. Comments described judges taking care to make sure families in court are heard by them, and an overall high level of expertise in juvenile and family law among judicial officers. When challenges were noted it was usually specific to particular judges when the family division seat was not a good fit for them in terms of their background or comfort/disposition toward children and/or families in court, many of who are from diverse backgrounds and face challenges out of their control (e.g., language, transportation, poverty, mental illness, structural bias in public agencies, etc.). A number of interview respondents indicated that these issues could be resolved through additional judicial training opportunities, or by taking advantage of the considerable longevity of some judicial officers and pairing them with the newer judges or hearing masters as mentors. The strong communication channels for when problems arise, that were a theme in the survey responses, were also a theme during interviews and an important check and balance under this goal area.

Clark County

In Clark County, with 20 judges (soon to be 26) and 9 hearing masters (soon reducing to 6), the challenges described are like those for Washoe County but somewhat amplified. There are similar cycles for judicial officer meetings, but it has proven difficult to schedule these in a manner that accommodates everyone, including the hearing masters due to a lack of calendar coverage. Interview subjects indicated

that judicial/hearing master teams have been implemented under 1F/1J in Clark County and this has improved the communication pathway from judges to hearing masters. There are judges with considerable longevity on the family division bench but there currently is not a formal process to establish mentoring relationships.

As in Washoe County, a number of stakeholders indicated that consistency in procedures across courtrooms represented an important challenge. With almost 30 judicial officers in Clark County, stakeholders emphasized that individual differences across judicial officers make for challenging efforts in case preparation and in-court practices. These stakeholders called for greater consistency when possible and procedures for addressing judicial officers who operate outside standards for courtroom decorum or whose performance falls outside of the family division's collective standards. The number of judicial officers who present consistency challenges was characterized by some as typically about 4 among 30 on an ongoing basis as positions are filled and assignments change.

Public Trust and Confidence

Washoe County

In Washoe County, opinions differed on this goal due to a recent challenge that the family division has faced and addressed with a new judge that was not well-suited for a family division assignment and was removed. During this period, according to some interview subjects, there was a noticeable erosion of public trust. Other interview subjects think that the family division continues to do well under this goal and that their handling of the recent situation, though it also created a vacancy and exceptional workload stress, is an example of why the court is mostly held in high regard.

Interview subjects working child abuse/neglect and juvenile justice also provided many examples where there was strong interaction with families, such as ongoing surveying of youth and parents by DJS and regular community stakeholder meetings in both abuse/neglect and juvenile justice. Where challenges were noted it was usually tied by the interview subjects to judicial workload and the size of hearing schedules. There is optimism that the filling of the judicial vacancy and the creation of a new, additional judicial position will help address these challenges. There is also optimism about technology helping to increase public trust and confidence, and confidence among family division staff that their information technology department will continue to make strides to help support their operating goals. Examples include the fee-for-service co-parenter application to help parents in divorce and custody cases prepare to make decisions about parenting time, the on-demand ADR, and online applications so that victims requesting temporary protection orders do not have to be in the proximity of their adversary.

Clark County

In Clark County, there was also a divergence of opinion on the division's performance under this goal. Workload challenges, combined with the need for ongoing, topic-specific judicial training were challenges that are not completely met and impact public trust and confidence in the court and there was a need for ways to bring informal complaints about performance forward. Some interview subjects felt excluded from discussions about reforms that impacted their specific operational area.

Some family division units or specific programs had ongoing approaches to collecting client/family feedback and others did not have a structured process. For example, the legal services self-help center collects client feedback. In promoting more effective informal options to formal delinquency system involvement, numerous interview participants highlighted the efforts of the county's DJJS in creating and expanding the innovative juvenile assessment or community resource center model known as The Harbor. These efforts have included the creation of community advisory boards that, according to interview subjects, have played essential roles in establishing centers that allow families to seek and access help without having to penetrate the formal child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems. These centers also attempt to obtain feedback from families after initial contact.

Overall, interview subjects suggest there is a need for technical assistance on the topic of client/family voice that promotes open communication and gathers public input in an organized, safe and respectful manner with multiple options that help to filter case or outcome-specific suggestions/complaints from systemic ones about cleanliness of the facility, parking, waiting areas, hearing delay and security.

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Appendix A: Onsite Interview Participants

While on site in June 2019, NCJJ conducted interviews with a broad range of family division judicial officers and agency director stakeholders in Washoe and Clark counties.

Washoe County Interview Participants and Roles	
<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>
Alicia Lerud	Assistant Court Administrator/Court Clerk Supervisor
Frank Cervantes	Director of Juvenile Services
Gianna Verness	Delinquency Public Defender
Herb Kaplan	Adult Civil Commitment Attorney
Hon. Doherty	Family Division Judge
Hon. Dixie Grossman	Family Division Judge
Hon. Cynthia Lu	Family Division Judge
Hon. Bridget Robb	Family Division Judge
Jackie Bryant	Court Administrator & Clerk of Courts
Jeffrey Martin	Civil Division District Attorney
Jennifer Rains	Dependency Public Defender
Jo Lee Wickes	Juvenile Dependency Prosecutor
Julie Wise	Clerk of Courts
Kathleen Baker	Child Support Prosecutor
Mary Herzik	Family Services Program Director
Amy Banales	Hearing Master
Paige Dollinger	Hearing Master
Greg Shannon	Hearing Master
Michelle Purdy	Clerk of Courts
Tyler Beach	Dependency Prosecutor

Clark County Interview Participants and Roles

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>
Amy Mastin	Hearing Master
April Green	Director of DV Project, Legal Aid Center of Southern NV
Brigid Duffy	Attorney, Director of DA Dependency & Delinquency
Carolina Griffin	Attorney, Delinquency Track
CEO Steve Grierson	Chief Executive Officers, 8th Judicial District Court
Chaka Crome	Private Attorney
Christopher Tilman	Attorney, Dependency Track
Corrine Price	Private Attorney
Courtney Ketter	Attorney, Dependency Track
Darin Imlay	Attorney, Director of PD
DeDe Parker	Manager of Specialty Courts
Drew Christenson	Director, Office of Court Appointed Counsel
Elizabeth Ham	President CASA Foundation
Holly Roys	Hearing Master, Dependency
Hon. Arthur Ritchie, Jr.	Family Division Judge
Hon. Bryce Duckworth	Family Division Judge
Hon. Charles Hoskin	Family Division Judge
Hon. Frank Sullivan	Family Division Judge
Hon. Linda Marie Bell	Chief Judge of the 8th Judicial District Court
Hon. Linda Marquis	Family Division Judge
Hon. William Voy	Family Division Judge
Jack Martin	Director, Department of Juvenile Justice
Jane Femiano	Hearing Master
Janice Wolf	Attorney, Legal Aid Center
Jeff Whittun	Director, DA Family/Child Support
Kris O'Conner	Manager, FC Clerk Division
Leonard Cash	Family Court Administrator
Liz Ortenburger	CEO SafeNest
Marshal Willick	Private Attorney
Michael Watson	Chief, DA, Delinquency
Mike Doan	Assistant Court Administrator
Randall Forman	Staff Attorney
Ronald Cordes	Chief DA, Dependency Track
Sheila Parks	Manager, CASA
William Croft	Hearing Master, Delinquency
Stephanie McDonald	Director, FC Self-Help Center
Tim Burch	Director, Department of Family/Social Services
Xavier Planta	Attorney, Legal Aid Center

Appendix B: Nevada Family Court Assessment Site Visit Interview Protocol

The National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) was retained by the Supreme Court of Nevada in January of 2019 to conduct an assessment of the family court model operating in Washoe and Clark counties. NCJJ is assessing the status of Nevada’s family court reforms amid the current operating environment and pressures on juvenile and family law dockets.

The purpose of on site interviews is to gather information from family court stakeholders working with the court on a routine basis (e.g., private attorneys, caseworkers, agency directors, etc.). The information gathered will help augment the results of two online surveys by discussing family court operations topics in more detail, and explore challenges and strengths of the family court model as it is currently operating within the jurisdiction.

The responses you provide will remain confidential; that is, your name will not be associated with the results we describe in a final report. You can stop participation in the interview at any time.

Respondent Name: _____

Title: _____

Agency: _____

Email: _____

1. How many years have you been a (judge, court administrator, etc.)?
2. Could you tell us a little about your background and the responsibilities of your current position?
3. In what role do you/your agency/organization interact with the Family Court?

Case type reference:	
Divorce/dissolution	Minor guardianship and conservatorship
Paternity	Adult guardianship and conservatorship
Custody	Emancipation of minors
Visitation	Minor’s disabilities
Child Support	Name changes
Inter-jurisdictional enforcement/support	Involuntary commitment/quarantine
Temporary protection orders	Authorization of abortion

<p>Child protection from abuse and neglect</p> <p>Juvenile delinquency</p> <p>Juvenile status offenses</p> <p>Termination of parental rights</p> <p>Adoption of children</p> <p>Adoption of adults</p>	<p>Approval of withholding/withdrawing life support</p> <p>Marriage approval for minor</p> <p>Damages proximate result of domestic violence</p>
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4. What do you think are the **strengths** of the current court system in resolving family issues?
5. Based on your interactions with the Family Court, how **busy** does the court seem? What are docket sizes like? **How far out** does the schedule extend for status reviews or motion hearing?
6. Based on your Agency's/organization's interactions in the Family Court to what extent does the system encourage **non-adversarial methods** of resolving juvenile and family cases? What opportunities exist to expand ADR?
7. To what extent do costs assessed by the family division create a financial burden for families in court? Are there opportunities to reduce **financial burdens**?
8. Based on your role and clients of the court you interact with how does the family division extend services to **self-represented litigants**?
9. Which of the family **case types are the most strained or difficult**? Why - timeliness, poor representation, continuances, contested matters, continually end up back in court, lack of services to help families, etc.) What can be done to address these issues?
10. If **delay** is a problem, where is it most likely to occur (what case type, what hearing stage)? Are **judicial orders** distributed in a timely fashion?
11. To what extent does the family division engage in efforts to reduce the **trauma children** and other vulnerable family members experience in the court hearing process?
12. What measures does the court take to promote **safety** and to **address the volatility of domestic violence**? Do clients generally feel safe in court?
13. What is the extent of information available to you regarding family cases with respect to **past or current proceedings** involving this family? At what point in the proceedings is this information available? How do you use this information about related cases? Does the nature and extent of information vary by type of case?
14. How satisfied are you with your court's ability to **coordinate cases** involving the same family? Why?

15. What changes would you suggest to **improve the coordination of cases** involving family members?
16. To what extent do Family Division judges exercise a **leadership role in the community** or in advocating for needed disposition resources (e.g., treatment services, community counseling, gender-specific programming)?
17. How **consistent are judicial procedures** across judicial departments on topics such as continuance control, case management steps, the content of judicial orders?
18. Do **you/your agency have the resources** you need to effectively deal with the family cases you work with/that come before you?
19. Based on your experience in the Family Court, are judges and hearings masters **adequately trained** to the cases they are assigned?
20. What role does **technology** play in improving operations in the family division?
21. What is the **role of data, research and planning** within the current family division operations where you touch it?
22. What challenges does the **family division's physical plant present?** (e.g., overcrowding, victim/witness separation, security flow). Is the facility child-friendly and accessible (e.g., waiting areas, infant/child care on site)?
23. What opportunities do families in court have to provide **feedback on their experiences?** How does your agency provide feedback with the family division?
24. What is the **appropriate support role of the state court/AOC** in improving family division operations?
25. If you could recommend **one policy change** at the state and/or local level what would it be? If you could address one resource challenge what would it be?

Appendix C: Clark County Family Division Related Case Rate Statistics (Preliminary)

During the study, NCJJ asked both the Washoe and Clark counties court IT offices about the feasibility of using their primary data systems to select certain family division case types (e.g., divorces with children, divorces without children, abuse/neglect, delinquency, and temporary protection orders) and measure the likelihood that a litigant had a related case type currently pending or in the past with the family division. The District Court, Information Technology Division in Clark County was able to develop related case measures across samples of five case types and summarize them in the charts contained in this appendix. The process was completely automated, except for manual checking of the results by data support staff. They had never attempted this before, but their recent immersion in supporting their IJ1F auto-assignment policy opened pathways for attempting to produce related case measures for the first time. The five appendix examples (related case charts) are preliminary and are intended to promote discussion of the ability of Nevada District Courts to begin answering questions such as:

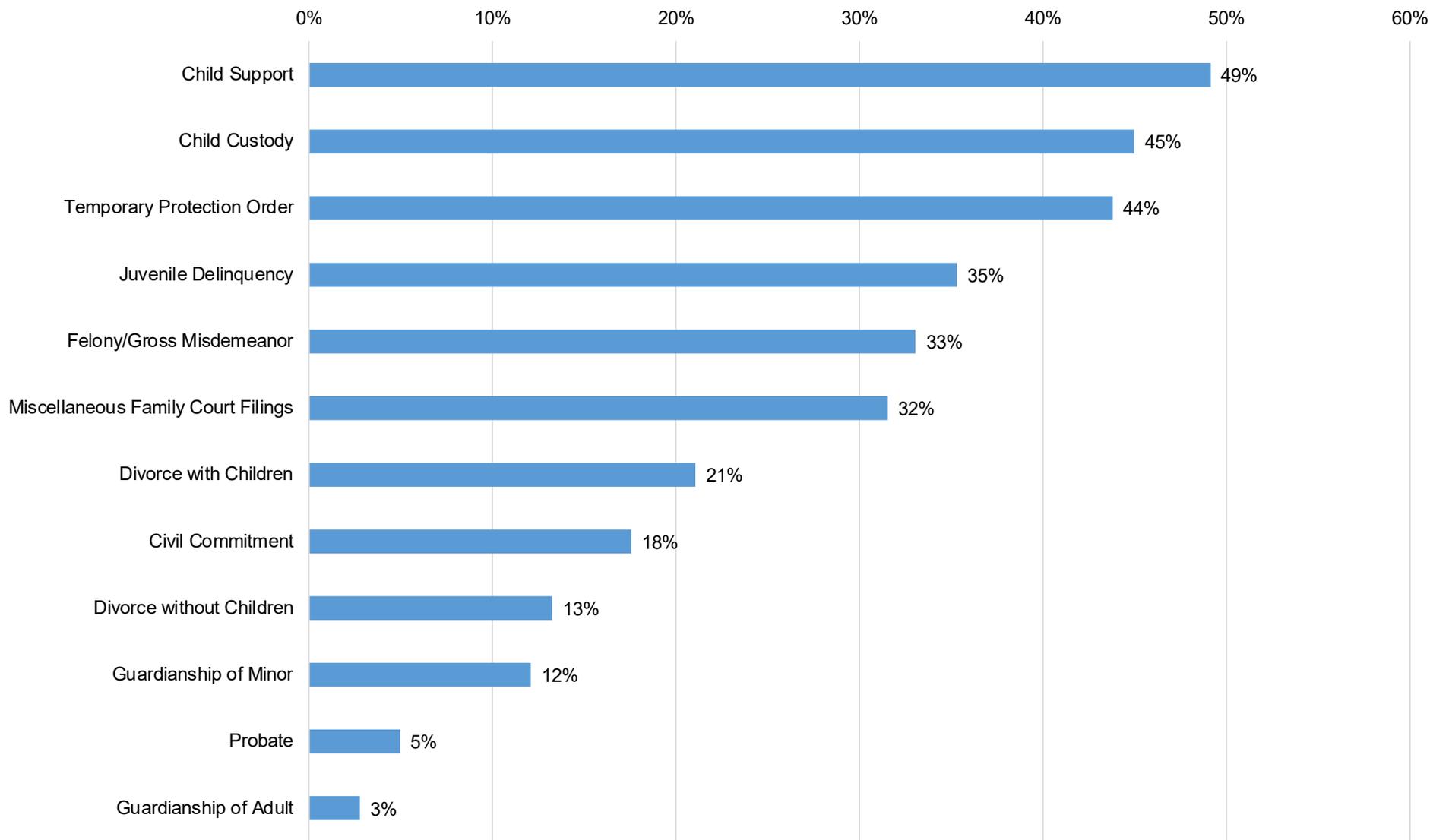
- What case types are most likely to have families in court on multiple matters?
- When families have multiple cases over time in the family division what types of related case types are those likely to be?
- What proportion of [X case filings] have adults in the case with past or present criminal cases within the district court?

For example, the first chart in this appendix presents related case rates for dependency case types. Among the five case types dependency is most likely to have related cases. The last chart in the series shows divorces without children, which were the least likely to have related cases. Regarding dependency, nearly half of the sampled cases (49%) had a family member with a past or present child support case, 45% had a child custody matter, 44% had a temporary protection order and 35% had a past or present delinquency matters.

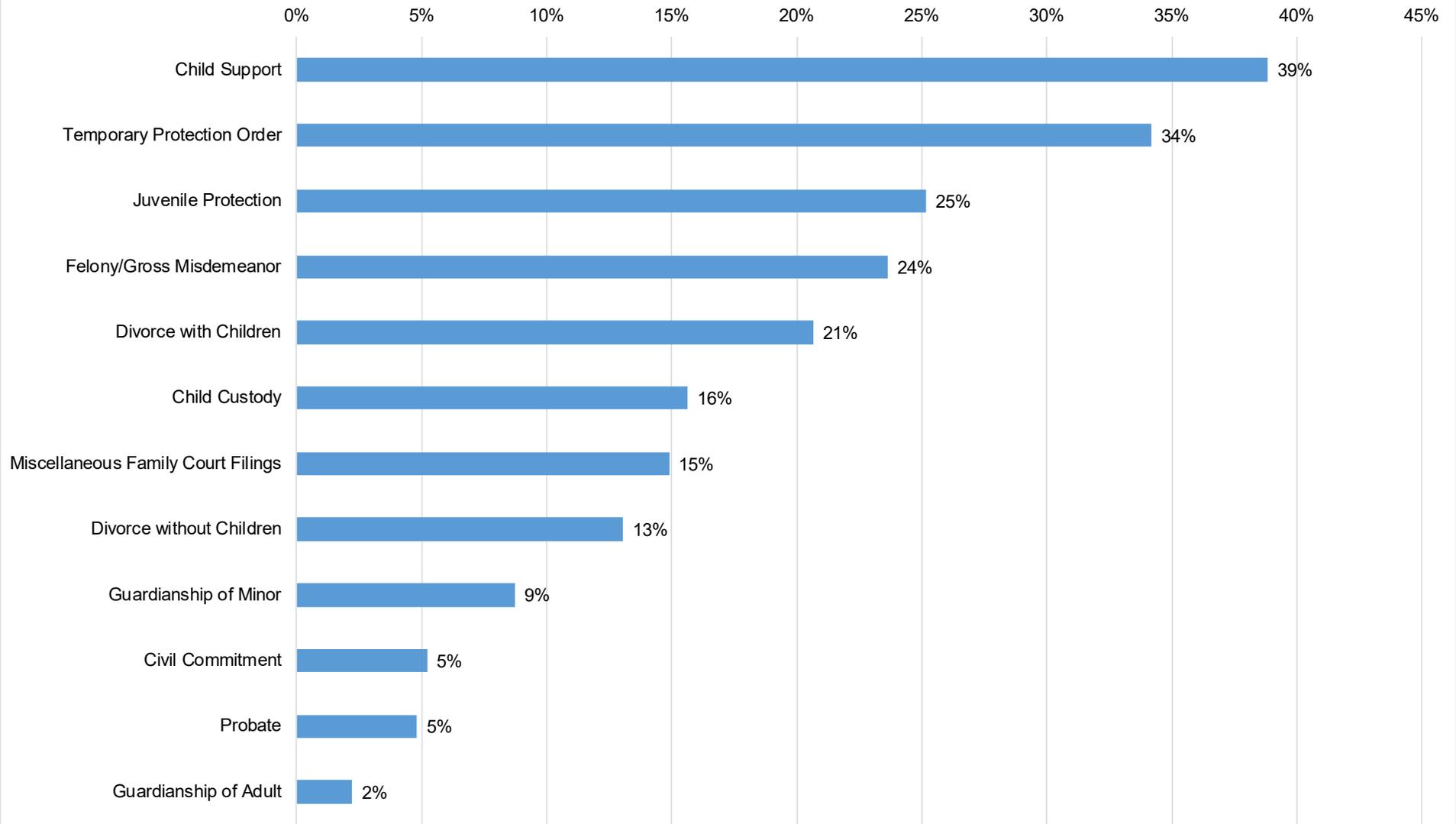
The capacity to see the intricacies of the present and past experiences of families in court is central to the premise of a coordinated family model, but jurisdictions have generally lacked the technology resources to begin building the logic and automated routines to relate the cases.

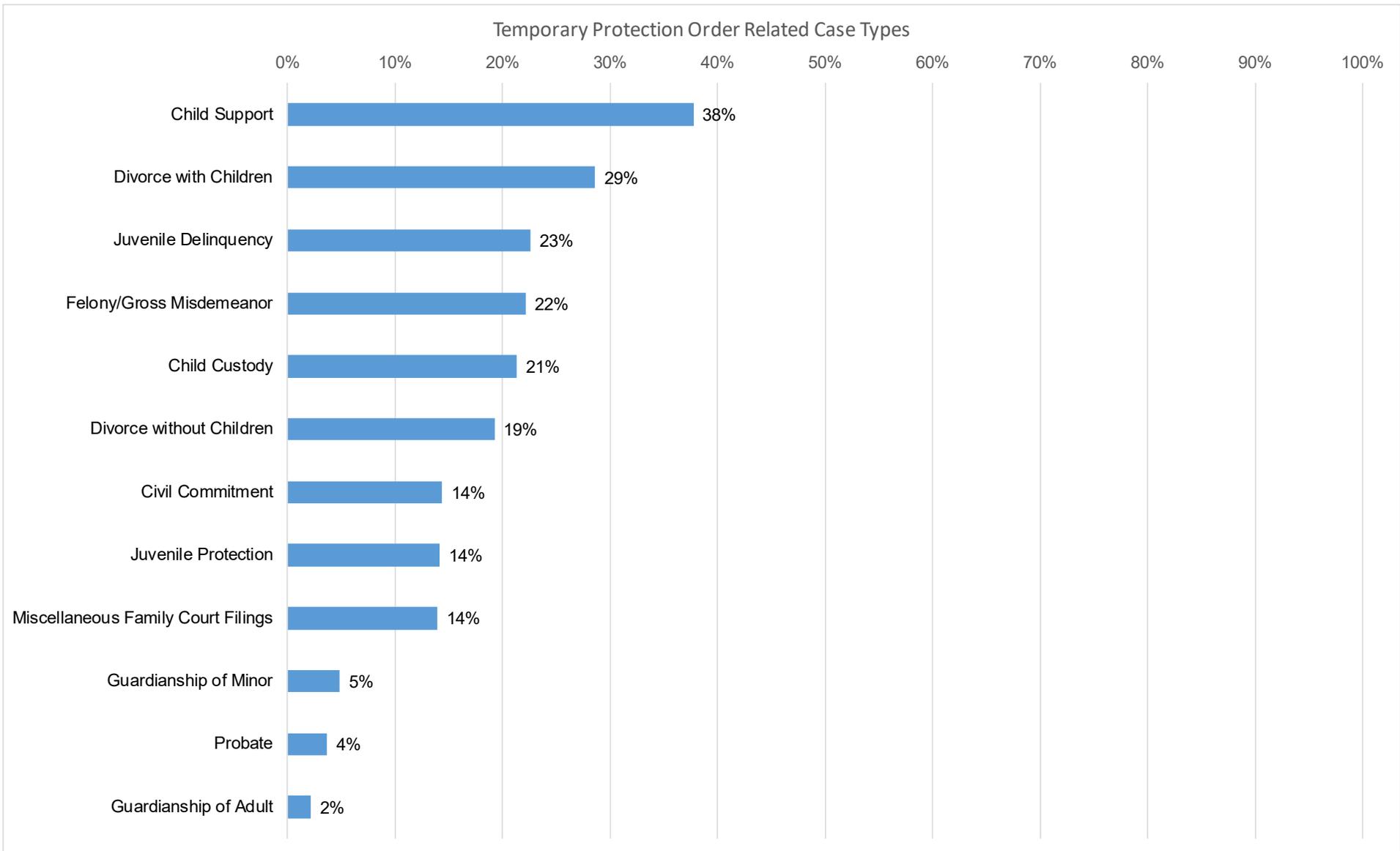
The Washoe County Court Information Technology Office has a similar capacity that will be accelerated during their Inspires project with IBM-Watson.

Dependency Related Case Types

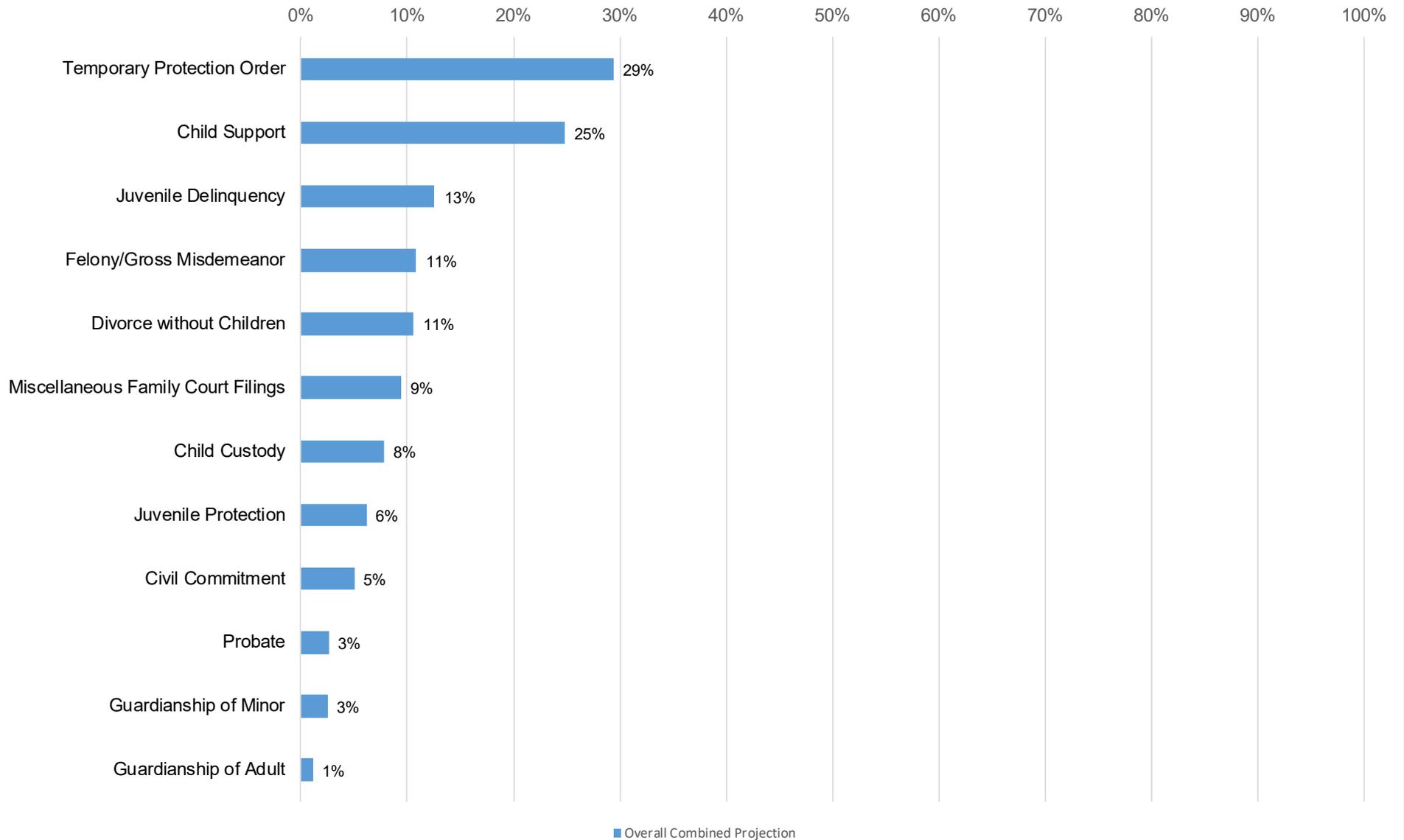


Delinquency Related Case Types

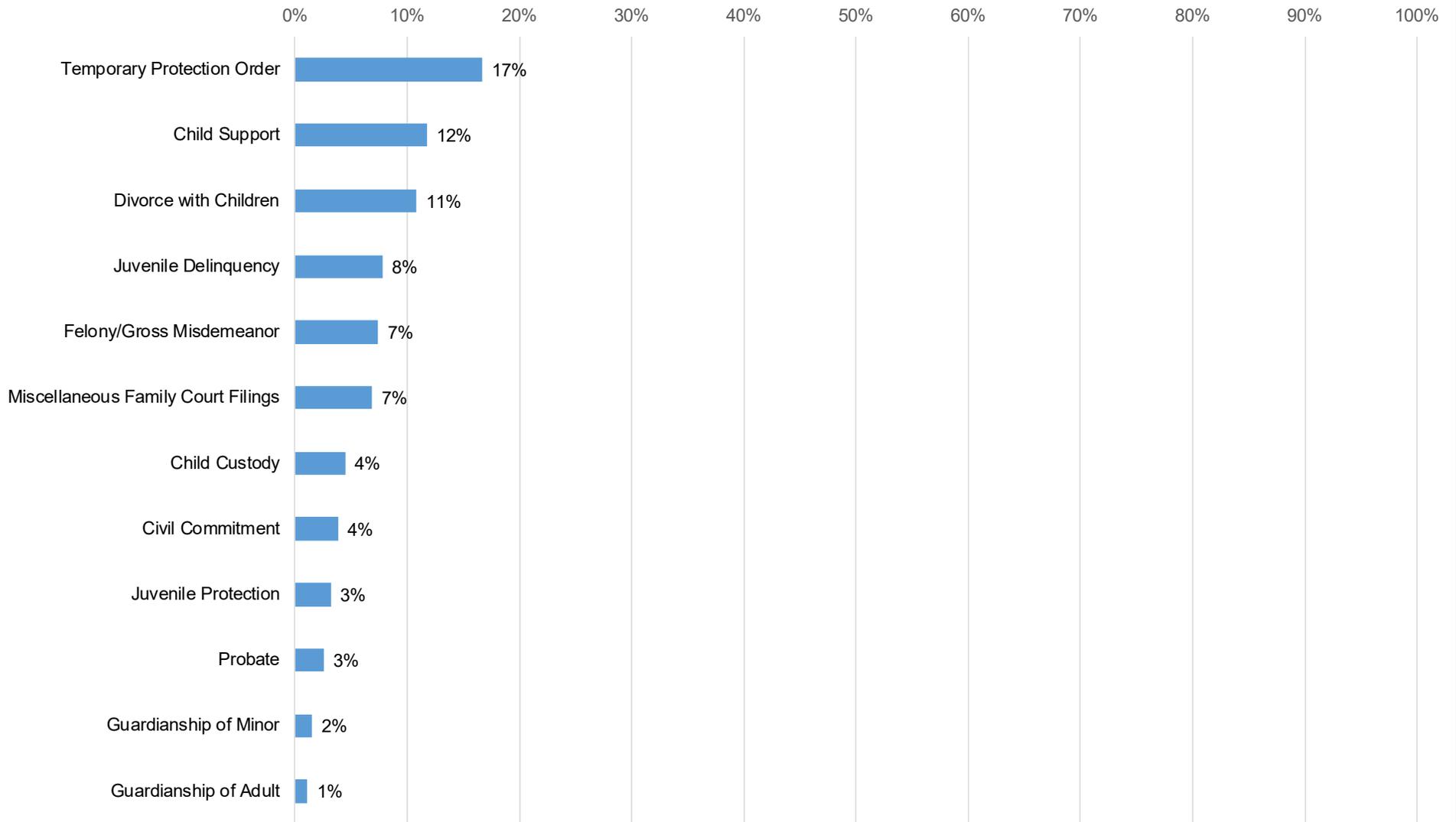




Divorce With Children Related Case Types



Divorce Without Children Related Case Types



National Center for Juvenile Justice

The research division of the **National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges**

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