

Agency Oversight: Required Report from Judicial Branch on Pending Civil Cases

2021-2022 Law and Justice Interim Committee

January 19, 2022

The Supreme Court of Montana
Office of the Court Administrator

Beth McLaughlin
Court Administrator



301 South Park
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, Montana 59620-3002
Telephone (406) 841-2950
FAX (406) 841-2955

October 15, 2021

TO: Cathy Duncan, Senior Fiscal Analyst
Section D, Finance Subcommittee

FROM: Beth McLaughlin
Supreme Court Administrator

RE: HB693 Required Report

Attached is the report of open general civil cases (DV) required by HB693. The report is directly generated from the Full Court case management system using the parameters of "every civil case in an open status" as of September 30, 2021. The report is broken down by Judicial District and counties within a given District. The committee should be aware of the following limitations to this report:

- Litigants filing a civil case have three years in which to serve the other party following the filing and opening of a case in the system. Cases reflected in this report may not yet be served on the responding party.
- Clerks of the District Courts are responsible for closing cases resolved either by a court decision or via other means (settlement agreements, party did not pursue the case, etc.). However, significant workloads in many county offices create administrative backlogs for clerks. You will note several more rural counties with a significant number of older open cases. It is highly likely these are *not* active cases, but cases that should be administratively closed by the Clerk of the District Court in that county.
- For context, almost 24,000 civil cases were filed in Montana's District Courts in 2020. This represents about 40% of the total caseload.

Please let me know if the committee needs additional information.

Pending Civil Cases - Q3 2021

District / Court	2 Yrs Pending	3 Yrs Pending	4 Yrs Pending	5+ Yrs Pending	Grand Total
1	123	32	17	27	199
Broadwater County District Court	15	7	6	9	37
Lewis & Clark County District Court	108	25	11	18	162
2	92	84	29	44	249
Butte-Silver Bow County District Court	92	84	29	44	249
3	26	22	5	3	56
Anaconda-Deer Lodge County District Court	16	16	2	2	36
Granite County District Court	5	2	1	1	9
Powell County District Court	5	4	2		11
4	227	68	19	35	349
Mineral County District Court	10	1		1	12
Missoula County District Court	217	67	19	34	337
5	23	11	5	3	42
Beaverhead County District Court	5	1			6
Jefferson County District Court	9	3	4	1	17
Madison County District Court	9	7	1	2	19
6	26	6	3	6	41
Park County District Court	23	5	1	2	31
Sweet Grass County District Court	3	1	2	4	10
7	43	39	27	217	326
Dawson County District Court	13	19	18	114	164
McCone County District Court	2	3	1	4	10
Prairie County District Court	4	1		1	6
Richland County District Court	23	14	8	91	136
Wibaux County District Court	1	2		7	10
8	67	39	21	19	146
Cascade County District Court	67	39	21	19	146
9	27	19	2	15	63
Glacier County District Court	5	4		3	12
Pondera County District Court	10	8		1	19
Teton County District Court	2	2	1	1	6
Toole County District Court	10	5	1	10	26
10	8	8	5	15	36
Fergus County District Court	7	3			10
Judith Basin County District Court		2	5	15	22
Petroleum County District Court	1	3			4
11	138	83	24	10	255
Flathead County District Court	138	83	24	10	255
12	25	9	9	9	52
Chouteau County District Court	9	1	7	1	18
Hill County District Court	15	4	1	1	21
Liberty County District Court	1	4	1	7	13
13	129	59	22	97	307
Yellowstone County District Court	129	59	22	97	307
14	19	8	2	14	43
Golden Valley County District Court	1	1		3	5
Meagher County District Court	1	1		3	5
Musselshell County District Court	12	3		4	19
Wheatland County District Court	5	3	2	4	14
15	26	41	35	120	222
Daniels County District Court	2	1			3
Roosevelt County District Court	7	16	9	22	54
Sheridan County District Court	17	24	26	98	165

Pending Civil Cases - Q3 2021

District / Court	2 Yrs Pending	3 Yrs Pending	4 Yrs Pending	5+ Yrs Pending	Grand Total
16	19	14	5	9	47
Carter County District Court		1			1
Custer County District Court	4		1		5
Fallon County District Court	1				1
Garfield County District Court	1			2	3
Powder River County District Court		2			2
Rosebud County District Court	7	8	4	2	21
Treasure County District Court	6	3		5	14
17	20	14	3	2	39
Blaine County District Court	7	9	3	1	20
Phillips County District Court	2	2		1	5
Valley County District Court	11	3			14
18	79	28	16	12	135
Gallatin County District Court	79	28	16	12	135
19	19	23	16	14	72
Lincoln County District Court	19	23	16	14	72
20	30	13	13	13	69
Lake County District Court	16	5	2	5	28
Sanders County District Court	14	8	11	8	41
21	72	42	13	6	133
Ravalli County District Court	72	42	13	6	133
22	22	13	2	14	51
Big Horn County District Court	5	3		2	10
Carbon County District Court	6	3	1	3	13
Stillwater County District Court	11	7	1	9	28
Grand Total	1260	675	293	704	2932