FAMILY COURT

HIGHLIGHTS
Fiscal Year 2019–20

Caseload
42,671 civil domestic cases filed in family court districts

Pending Cases
Only 28% of pending domestic cases in family court districts were more than one year old compared to 49% in non-family court districts.

Median case age of pending domestic cases was 144 days in family court districts compared to 351 days in non-family court districts.

Family Court Best Practices

- Judicial Leadership
- One Judge / One Family
- Customer Service Focus
- Domestic and Juvenile Case Time Standards
- Active Case Management by the Court
- Maximum Use of Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Collaborative Local Advisory Committees
- Specially Trained Judges and Staff
- Additional Court and Community Services

WHO WE ASSIST

Clerks of court, court staff, custody mediators, family court staff, Guardian ad Litem (GAL) attorneys, judges, parent attorneys, public
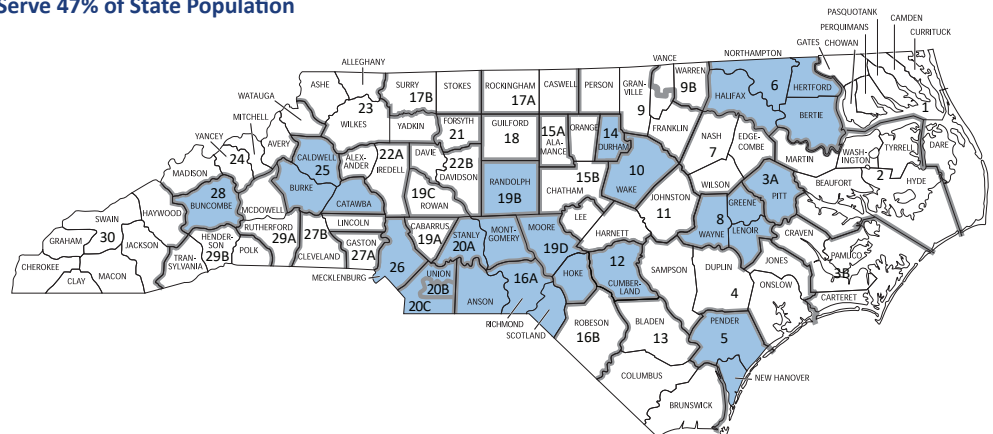

Facing a court matter can be an overwhelming and stressful experience, particularly when it involves family matters such as divorce, custody, domestic violence, juvenile delinquency, or abuse. Since their inception in 1999, North Carolina Family Courts have helped families resolve difficult legal issues of child custody, support, and property distribution in a timely, more affordable, and often non-adversarial manner.

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) Family Court program facilitates more timely, consistent, and thoughtful outcomes for a family's legal issues. Consolidating the legal issues of a family before a single judge or team of judges assigned to the family at case initiation allows the judge(s) to become familiar with the dynamics of each family and to better address their individual needs. The dedicated family court team ensures prompt and just resolution of family law issues to reduce childhood trauma that can result from contentious and lengthy legal battles.

FAMILY COURT DISTRICTS
Serve 47% of State Population

ABOUT FAMILY COURT

Benefits	Brief Description
Benefits to Families	• Expedited resolution of cases to quickly return stability to families • One Judge/One Family for continuity of decision making • Reduced psychological trauma to children through the delivery of parent education programs and resources • Lower cost of litigation through efficient resolution of cases • Personalized attention and direction to families navigating a complex legal system
Benefits to Taxpayers	• Quicker establishment of child support, spousal support, and distribution of marital assets, which reduces demands on public assistance that might otherwise occur through the loss of homes, vehicles, and businesses • Quicker permanent placement of children who are in the custody of county departments of social services lowers foster care costs
Benefits to Employers	• Consolidation of issues results in fewer hearings, which means fewer days away from work for mothers and fathers • Quicker disposition rates bring a return to normalcy for litigants resulting in less distracted and more productive employees

• *The introduction of Family Court in North Carolina has provided parties in domestic cases with equal and timely access to justice thereby reducing the trauma for all involved. The Family Law Court philosophy of "One Judge/One Family" and strict hearing guidelines have brought significantly faster resolutions for families in crisis especially displaced children.*

– Chief District Court Judge Galen Braddy, District 3A and Family Court Advisory Commission Chair

• *Children who are experiencing the angst of conflict between their parents deserve a legal system that provides access, consistency and decision-makers who are knowledgeable about the unique issues involved in domestic cases. Family court gives children hope of a timely, thoughtful resolution so that they have a chance at succeeding and not being a statistic in either juvenile or criminal court.*

– Rose Stout, Family Law Attorney

MEDIAN PENDING CASE AGE (DAYS)

■ Family Courts ■ Non-Family Courts