Under the North Carolina Constitution, the Judicial Branch is established as an equal branch of state government with the Legislative and Executive branches. North Carolina’s court system, called the General Court of Justice, is a state-operated and state-funded unified court system. The General Court of Justice consists of three divisions: appellate, superior court, and district court.

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) is the administrative agency for the Judicial Branch. As such, it provides services and resources to help the unified court system to operate more efficiently and effectively, taking into account each courthouse’s diverse needs, caseloads, and available resources. Services include providing administrative support to over 6,400 employees of the Judicial Branch, which includes 545 independently elected judicial officials.

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is head of the Judicial Branch and appoints a director to supervise the NCAOC. General Statute 7A–343 sets forth the duties of the director, which include budgeting and authorizing expenditures from appropriated funds, identifying staffing needs statewide, procuring and distributing equipment and supplies, and prescribing uniform practices for clerks. The director also makes recommendations for the overall improvement of the Judicial Branch.

All operating expenses of the Judicial Branch are paid by the state, including salaries and travel expenses of all court officials, juror and witness fees, and equipment and office supplies for the statewide judicial system. Counties and cities, however, are responsible for providing courtrooms and related judicial physical facilities.

IMPORTANT STATISTICS
AS OF JUNE 30, 2020

PERSONNEL
The Judicial Branch has more elected officials than the Executive and Legislative branches combined, including

- 7 Supreme Court justices
- 15 Court of Appeals judges*
- 107 superior court judges
- 273 district court judges
- 100 clerks of superior court
- 43 district attorneys

6,415.40 total full-time equivalent positions from all funding sources, as of June 30, 2020 (does not include Indigent Defense Services)

BUDGET
$578.4 million certified state appropriations for FY 2019 – 20
2.37% of total State General Fund Budget

About the FY 2019 – 20 Budget
88.4% salaries and benefits
27.7% of funds ($160 million) supports constitutionally mandated positions

FY 2019 – 20 State General Fund Appropriations
Certified Budget Total: $24.4 billion
Judicial Certified: $578.4 million

*Specialty services, courts, and alternative dispute resolution
Note: The certified budget is the budget enacted by the General Assembly.
### Monies disbursed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$629,015,727</td>
<td>total disbursements through Clerk of Superior Court Financial Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$218,668,676</td>
<td>remitted to State Treasurer for General Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$37,962,279</td>
<td>disbursed to other entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4,496,143</td>
<td>receipts collected and disbursed for special operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$59,891,053</td>
<td>disbursed to local governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$307,997,576</td>
<td>disbursed to citizens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Caseload

#### District Court

- **207,914** total cases filed
- **170,998** civil magistrate cases filed
- **172,844** civil magistrate cases disposed
- **184,010** civil district cases filed
- **178,977** civil district cases disposed
- **1,255,549** criminal cases filed
- **1,300,583** criminal cases disposed
- **405,384** infraction cases filed
- **420,310** infraction cases disposed

#### Superior Court

- **231,184** total cases filed
- **17,510** civil superior cases filed*
- **16,150** civil superior cases disposed
- **94,939** felony cases filed
- **105,184** felony cases disposed
- **16,091** misdemeanor cases filed**
- **16,616** misdemeanor cases disposed
- **71,551** estate cases filed
- **73,817** estate cases disposed
- **31,093** special proceedings filed***
- **35,080** special proceedings disposed

### Time to disposition (median time to disposition)

- **14** days civil magistrate cases
- **107** days district court felony cases
- **158** days district court misdemeanor cases, other than traffic
- **217** days total civil superior court cases
- **255** days superior court felony cases
- **206** days superior court misdemeanor cases, other than traffic
- **106** days special proceeding cases

### Personnel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justices and judges</td>
<td>689.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial court administrators</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk personnel</td>
<td>1,207.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCAOC staff</td>
<td>384.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magistrates</td>
<td>186.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District attorneys</td>
<td>63.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Miscellaneous

- **17,923** abused or neglected children served by the Guardian ad Litem program
- **32** districts with district court ordered arbitration programs
- **15** districts with funded family court