



RESEARCH, POLICY, AND PLANNING

HIGHLIGHTS FISCAL YEAR 2019–20

Micrographics

17,436 microfilm retrieval requests
12,034 regular
5,402 critical / expedite
6,286 discs reviewed for quality assurance
9,229 discs received for quality assurance

Records Office

642 destruction / transfer of records request
16 Judicial Branch offices outfitted with shelving

Expunctions

16,478 expunction petitions
16,943 expunction orders
2,456 conditional discharge / special commission requests
4,041 conditional discharge / special commission orders
661 requests for verification of prior expunctions

Contracts

23 counties and municipalities
Totaling more than 100 FTE and \$8 million

Grants

43 federal and local entities
Totaling more than 250 FTE and \$20 million

Legislative Requests

34 bills affecting the Judicial Branch
12 fiscal notes provided on proposed legislation

Ad-hoc data requests

646 completed

WHO WE ASSIST

Court officials and support staff
News and trade media organizations
State agencies
Local government entities
Academics and researchers
Citizens of North Carolina
Judicial Branch commissions and councils



The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) Research, Policy, and Planning Division is responsible for providing recordkeeping guidelines, managing millions of records on microfilm, conducting research and generating reports on court statistics, managing grants and contracts, developing and analyzing workload data, and staffing and managing special projects. Tasks that the division commonly performs include:

- Conducting research to provide insight on issues facing the Judicial Branch, including extracting and analyzing data from NCAOC databases
- Providing the fiscal impact on proposed legislative bills affecting the Judicial Branch upon North Carolina General Assembly request
- Generating reports to answer requests for data from Judicial Branch stakeholders and other external customers (media, other state agencies, etc.)
- Managing the Judicial Branch grants and contracts process
- Working with Judicial Branch staff to analyze workload and staffing needs
- Promulgating Clerks of Superior Court Rules of Recordkeeping and Records Retention and Disposition Schedules
- Approving destruction and transferring to State Archives of certain types of paper records
- Creating and maintaining microfilmed records, reviewing and approving (QC) scanned court records
- Processing expunctions, both orders and petitions, and conditional discharges
- Serving as the NCAOC liaison with the state's Emergency Response Team and Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Division of State Archives
- Offering county support to develop local emergency response plans and recovery assistance of damaged records
- Offering assistance to county offices seeking improved efficiency and file security



Learning from court personnel and other subject matter experts to apply research, provide expertise, and implement plans in support of the NCAOC mission of helping the courts operate more efficiently and effectively

ABOUT RESEARCH, POLICY, AND PLANNING DIVISION

Services	Brief Description
Disaster Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Respond to disasters that affect courts— provide support to preserve damaged records
Expunctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maintain a confidential expunction database and process expunctions; the expunction team processes and uploads documents for district attorney access to expunctions granted under certain statutesProcess manually reported statistics and corrections to automated statistical systems
Grant and Contract Administration	Coordination, information, assistance, and oversight are provided for all grants coming to and/or through the Judicial Branch. Common partners are federal government agencies, state government agencies, county governments, local municipalities, and nonprofit agencies.
Legislative Requests	Responses are provided to legislators and North Carolina General Assembly staff ranging from workload, staffing, and fiscal impact matters to long-term policy research projects.
Micrographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Create microfilm copies of approved scanned records for long-term secure records retentionConduct quality assurance of records scanned by county staffMaintain backup copies of counties' microfilmed or scanned recordsRetrieve and email microfilmed documents to countiesProvide procedural scanning assistance to counties
Recordkeeping and Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promulgate the Clerks of Superior Court Rules of Recordkeeping and Records Retention and Disposition SchedulesMaintain a confidential expunction database and process expunctions; the expunction team processes and uploads documents for district attorney access to expunctions granted under certain statutesServe as NCAOC liaison with Department of Natural and Cultural ResourcesProcess destruction requests of particular types of court files and transfer to State Archives requests for records with permanent retention requirements
Statistical Analysis	Data are extracted and analyzed from the following NCAOC databases and used in policy analysis, media and legislative requests, and court performance management.
Workload Analysis	Workload models have been developed and maintained for district court judges, assistant district attorneys, district attorney legal assistants, clerks of superior court staff, family court coordinators, and magistrates. Staffing ratios have been developed and maintained for district court judicial support staff, superior court judicial support staff, and trial court administrators.

JUDICIAL BRANCH STATISTICS ACCESSIBLE ONLINE

In conjunction with NCAOC's transparency and accountability efforts, the Research, Policy, and Planning Division provides access to data and information online to the general public. In addition to producing hundreds of custom reports for court officials, media organizations, and the public each year, the division annually updates and publishes numerous reports on the web, available at www.NCcourts.gov/about/data-and-statistics. Examples of reports provided:

- County-level and statewide statistics on civil and criminal case types
- Domestic relations cases not involving child support (non IV-D)
- Domestic violence
- Felony convictions
- Foreclosures (residential and commercial)
- Impaired driving charges
- Statistical and operational summary reports on trial court caseload