

Sarpy County Court

COUNTY JUDGES

Tricia A. Freeman
Todd J. Hutton
S. Colin Palm
David J. Partsch

SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Hall of Justice
1210 Golden Gate Drive, Suite 3142
Papillion, Nebraska 68046-2888
(402) 593-5775 Fax (402) 593-2193

Barbara A. Pousson
Clerk Magistrate

May 9, 2025

RECEIVED

MAY 20 2025

Governor Jim Pillen
Nebraska State Capitol
P.O. Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848

Office of the Chief Justice

Re: Resignation from the County Court in the 2nd Judicial District

Dear Governor Pillen,

I am writing to inform you of my resignation from the County Court for the 2nd Judicial District effective at the close of business on June 30, 2025. As you know, this resignation is due to my appointment to the Court of Appeals April 10, 2025, for which I will be officially sworn in on July 1, 2025.

It has been my honor to serve on the County Court bench in the 2nd Judicial District with Judges Hutton, Palm and Partsch. They are hard-working, compassionate, and empathetic judges who are steadfast in their efforts to provide a forum for lawyers and litigants to have their matters heard in a fair, effective and efficient way. I know whoever fills the vacancy left by my departure will be welcomed and assisted by the fine judges of the 2nd Judicial District County Court.

Please advise if you need any additional information. I look forward to assuming the duties in my new position as a Judge of the Nebraska Court of Appeals.

Sincerely,



Tricia A. Freeman
County Court Judge

cc: Chief Justice Jeff Funke

EXHIBIT 03

LANCASTER COUNTY COURT
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT

575 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
Laurie J. Yardley
Judge

RECEIVED

JUN 26 2025

Office of the Chief Justice

June 25, 2025

Governor Jim Pillen
1445 K Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Governor Pillen,

This letter serves as formal notification that I am retiring from my position as Lancaster County Judge for the Third District effective August 1, 2025. It has been an honor and privilege to serve the citizens of Lancaster County as a Judge for the past thirty years. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have contributed to the administration of justice in the community.

Sincerely,

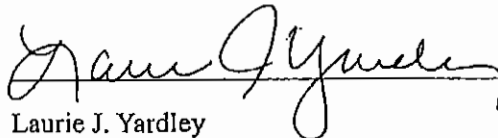

Laurie J. Yardley

EXHIBIT 04



RAENITA DOBERNECKER
BAILIFF

The District Court of Nebraska

FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
JUDGE LEIGH ANN RETELSDORF
HALL OF JUSTICE
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68163-0410
402.444-7014
FAX: 402-956-8157

WHITNEY SKUTT
COURTROOM CLERK

April 18, 2025

Honorable Jeffrey J. Funke
Chief Justice
Nebraska Supreme Court
Room 2214, State Capitol
Lincoln, NE 68509

Chief Justice Funke,

This letter is to notify you that I will officially retire from the Douglas County District Court bench on June 13, 2025.

It has been an honor to serve the citizens of Douglas County over the last sixteen years in this capacity.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leigh Ann Retelsdorf".

Leigh Ann Retelsdorf
District Court Judge

LAR/rfd

cc: Corey Steel, State Court Administrator
Hon. Jeffrey Lux, Douglas County Presiding Judge
Sheri Larsen, Douglas County District Court Administrator

EXHIBIT 05

MADISON COUNTY COURT

Leah Buhrman
CLERK MAGISTRATE

Seventh Judicial District
P.O. Box 230 · Madison, Nebraska 68748
Phone (402) 454-3311 Ext. 73
Fax (402) 454-3438

DONNA FARRELL TAYLOR
COUNTY JUDGE

MICHAEL L. LONG
COUNTY JUDGE

ROSS A. STOPPER
COUNTY JUDGE

The Honorable James D. Pillen
Governor, State of Nebraska
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848

RECEIVED

MAY 23 2025

Office of the Chief Justice

Dear Governor Pillen:

I am sending this letter to notify you of my intent to resign my position of County Judge of the Seventh Judicial District effective at the end of the business day on Wednesday, May 28, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. to assume the duties of District Court Judge of the Seventh Judicial District upon my swearing in on Thursday, May 29, 2025.

Respectfully yours,



Michael L. Long
County Court Judge -- 7th Judicial District
P.O. Box 230
Madison, NE 68748

cc: Corey R. Steel
Chief Justice Jeffrey J. Funke

EXHIBIT 06

District Courts

Weighted Caseload Report



Fiscal Year 2025

July 1, 2024, to
June 30, 2025



EXHIBIT 07

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Weighted Caseload Report

Nebraska District Courts Weighted Caseload Report

Nebraska has a district court in each of its 93 counties, organized into 12 Judicial Districts. Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 24-301.02, the Legislature determines the number of district court judges who serve in each judicial district, and the geographic boundaries of each judicial district. An objective assessment of judicial workload allows informed decisions about district boundaries and the number of judges needed to timely resolve the cases in each judicial district.

To assist in evaluating judicial workloads, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 24-1007(1) requires the Nebraska Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation (AOC) to compile judicial workload statistics based on caseloads weighted by category of case. These weighted caseload statistics are used by the Judicial Branch, the Judicial Resources Commission, and the Legislature to evaluate judicial need, and guide decisions and recommendations on how best to allocate judicial resources across the state.

To ensure the validity, uniformity and accuracy of the AOC's judicial workload statistics, a statewide judicial time study was conducted in 2019-2020 under the direction and leadership of the National Center for State Courts. For a full description of the judicial time study and the recommended weighting methodology and standards, see *Nebraska Judicial Workload Assessment Final Report* (October 2020) (this is noted on tables in this report with an asterisk) on the Nebraska Supreme Court Website. Because this Weighted Caseload Report uses the methodology and standards from the 2020 workload assessment, direct comparison to archived reports is not recommended.

Weighted caseload statistics approximate the number of judges a district needs to handle the current caseload based upon the calculations of a three-year rolling average of case filing data. Therefore, when weighted caseload statistics are examined in conjunction with other compelling and critical metrics, they provide a vital part of an objective and standardized assessment of judicial needs and the fair allocation of judicial resources across juvenile courts in the State of Nebraska.



Corey R. Steel

Nebraska State Court Administrator

Nebraska Supreme Court

Administrative Office of the Courts & Probation

Rm. 1211 State Capitol | P.O. Box 98910 | Lincoln, NE 68509

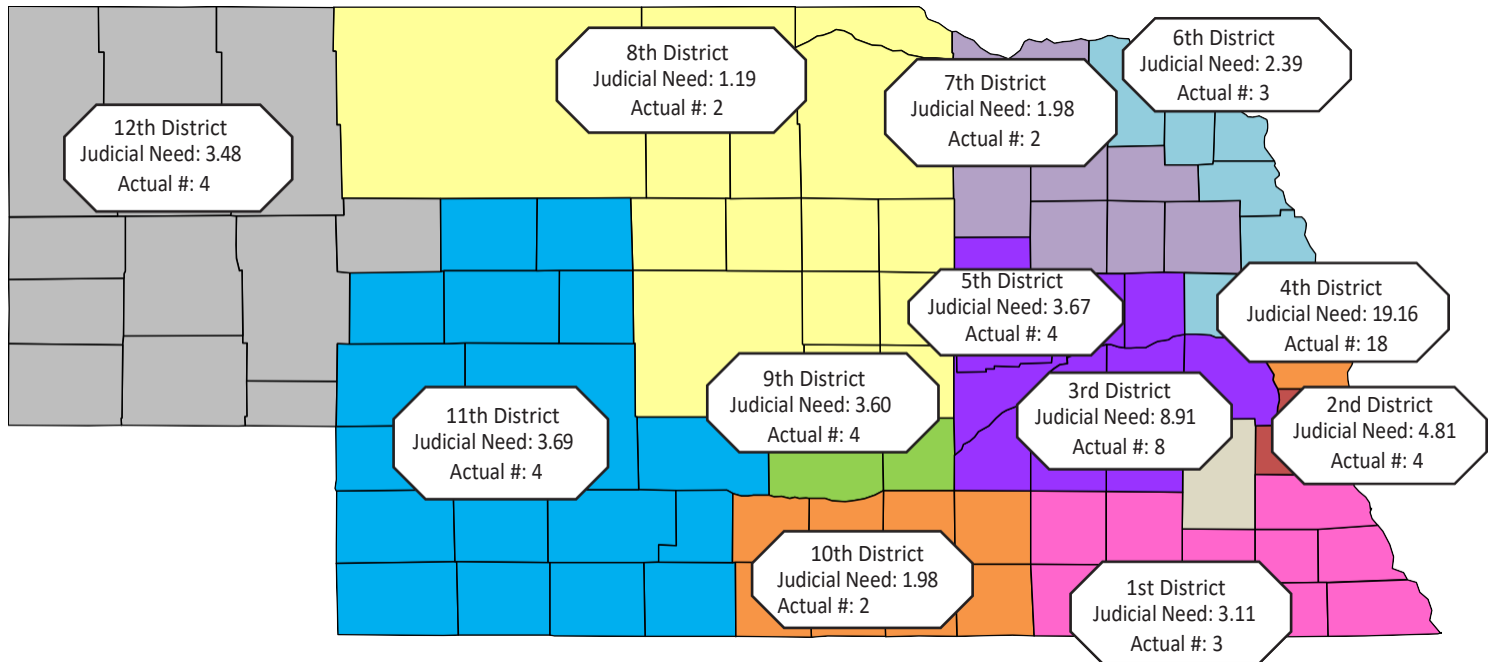
T 402.471.3730 | F 402.471.2197

www.supremecourt.nebraska.gov

Weighted Caseload Report

Nebraska District Court Judicial Needs

Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)



Note: Differences between the total District Court Need for Judges and the sum of individual counties is due to rounding to the nearest one-hundredth.

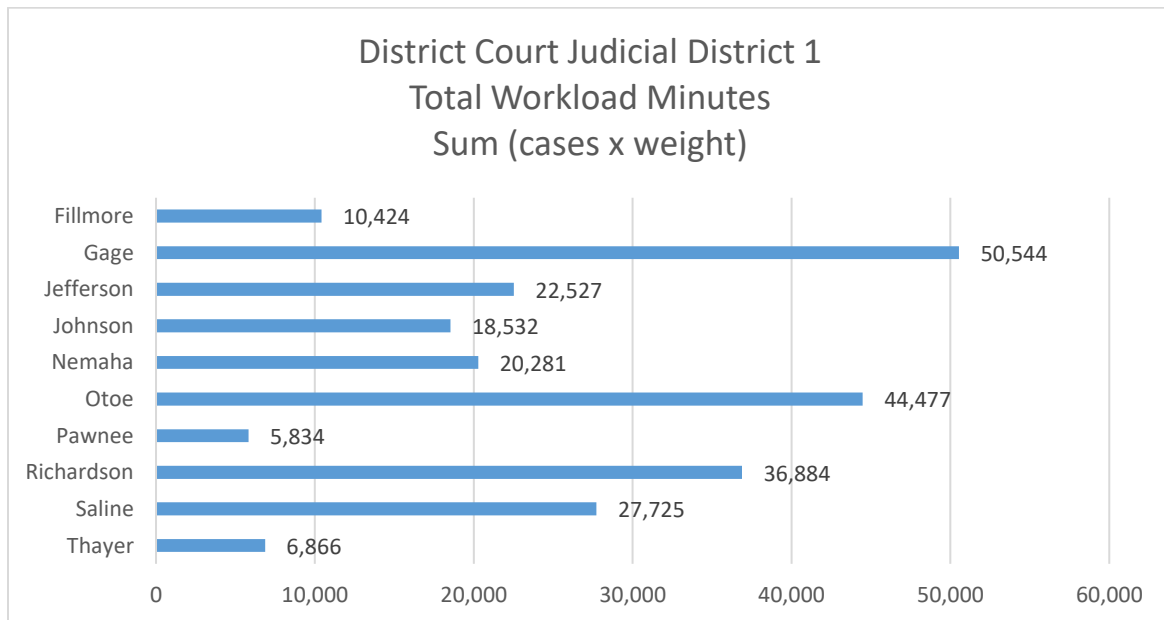
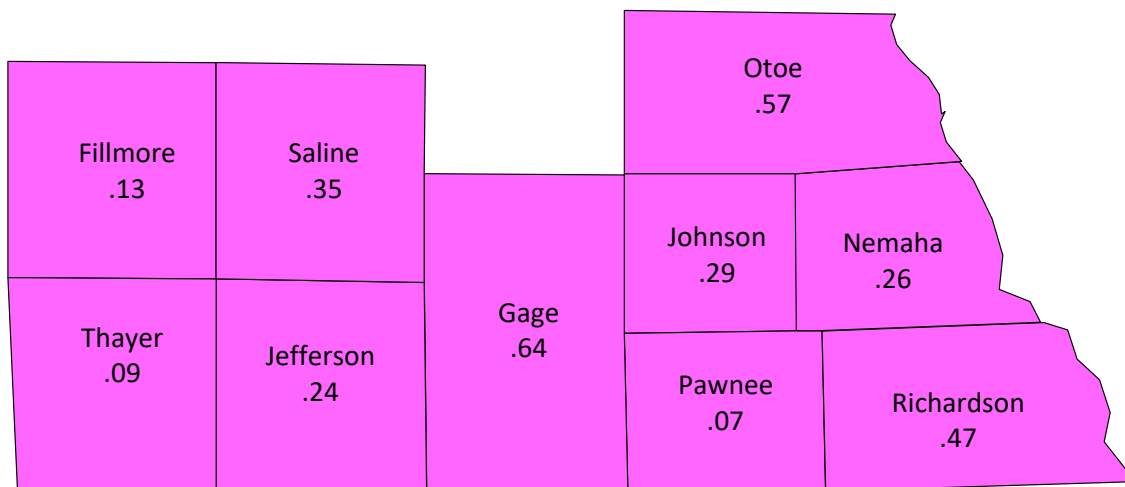
Weighted Caseload Report

1st Judicial District – District Court

District court need for judges: 3.11
 Current number of judges: 3
 Workload per judge: 1.04
 Predicted judicial resources need by county

Judges Serving the 1st District

Bargen
Schreiner
J. Smith

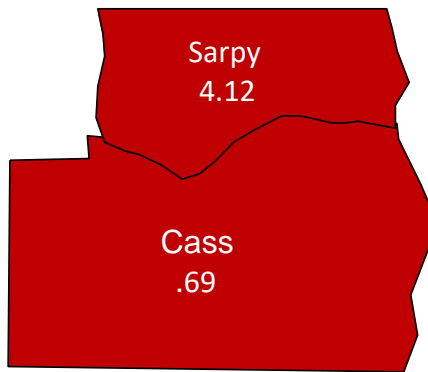


Weighted Caseload Report

2nd Judicial District – District Court

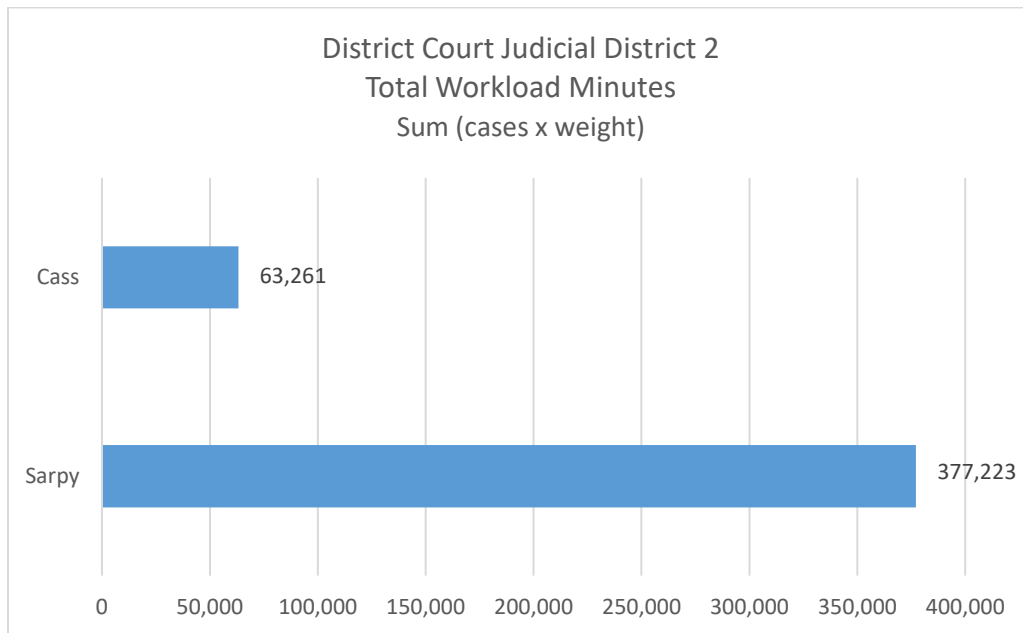
District court need for judges: 4.81
Current number of judges: 4
Workload per judge: 1.20

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Judges Serving the 2nd District

Cox
Martinez
M. Smith
Thompson

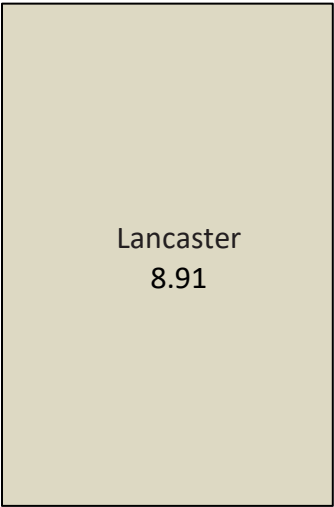


Weighted Caseload Report

3rd Judicial District – District Court

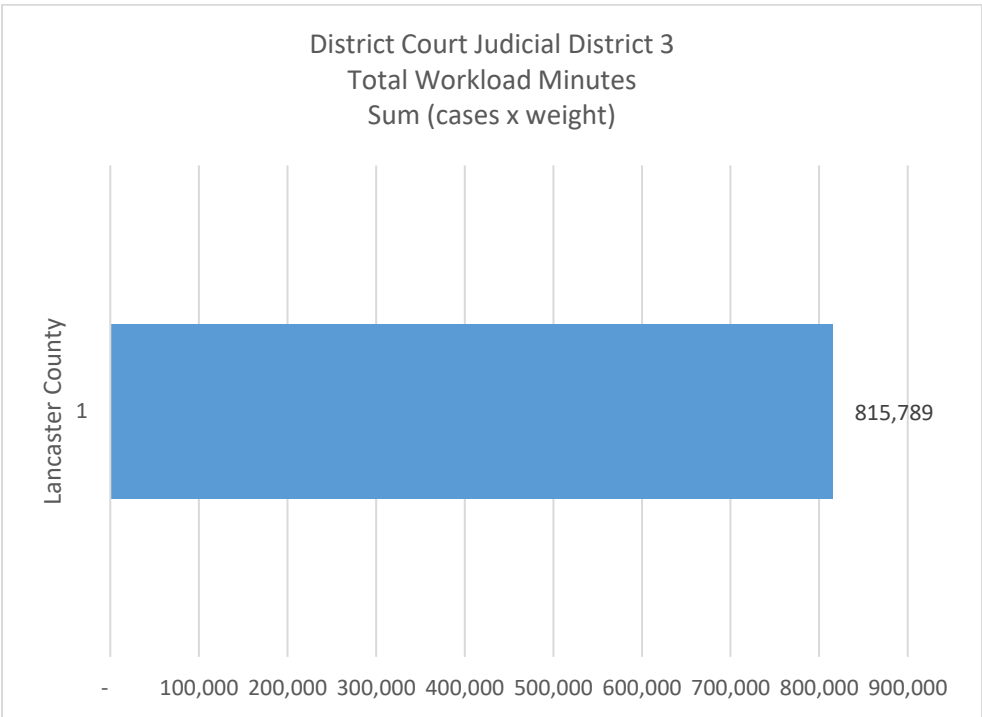
District court need for judges: 8.91
Current number of judges: 8
Workload per judge: 1.11

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Judges Serving the 3rd District

- Ideus**
- Jacobsen**
- Maret**
- McManaman**
- Mellor**
- Nelson**
- Post**
- Strong**

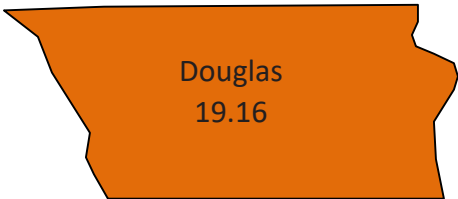


Weighted Caseload Report

4th Judicial District – District Court

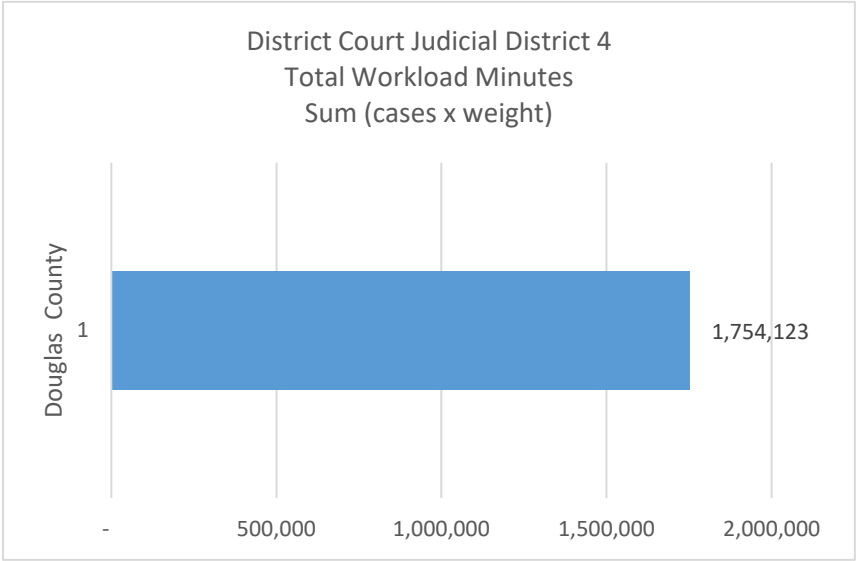
District court need for judges: 19.16
 Current number of judges: 18
 Workload per judge: 1.06

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Judges Serving the 4th District

- Alioth**
- Bataillon**
- Benson**
- T. Burns**
- Derr**
- Dougherty**
- Engleman**
- Keane**
- Lindberg (Bowie)**
- Lux**
- Masteller**
- Miller Pankonin**
- Polk**
- Vacant (Retelsdorf)**
- Srb**
- Stratman**
- Vaughn**
- Wheelock**



Weighted Caseload Report

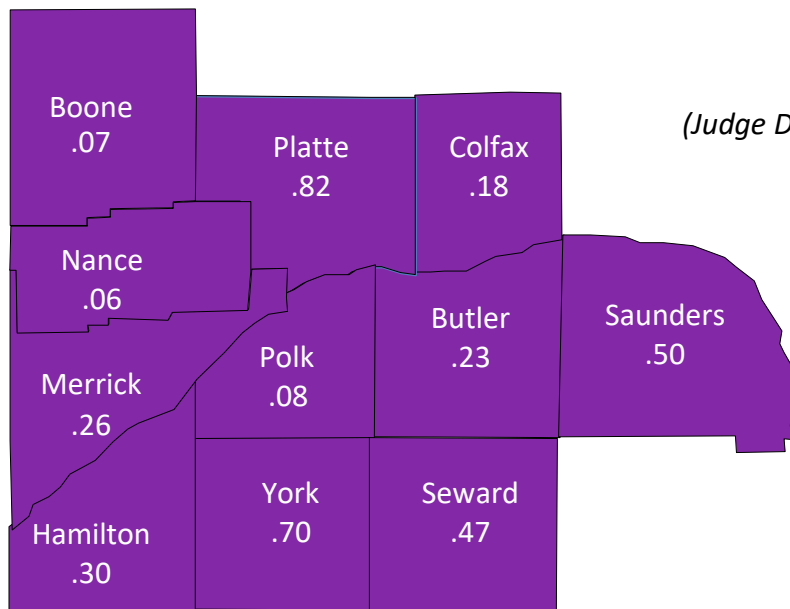
5th Judicial District - District Court

District court need for judges: 3.67

Current number of judges: 4

Workload per judge: 0.92

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Judges Serving the 5th District

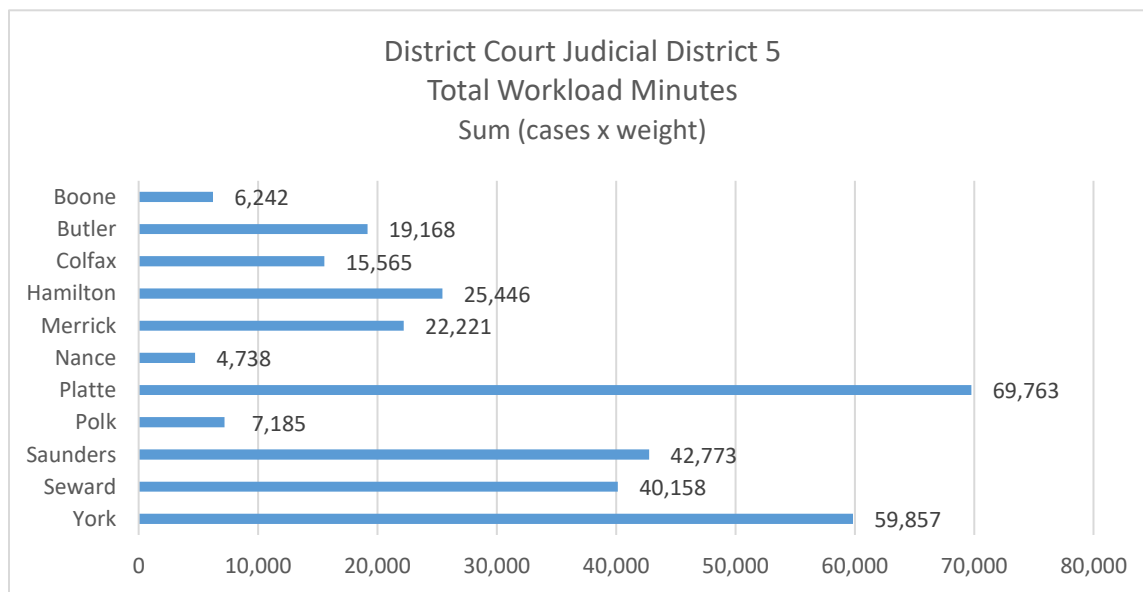
Vacant*

(Judge Doele was sworn in July 17th, 2025 – after caseloads were calculated)

Daugherty

Marroquin

Stecker



Weighted Caseload Report

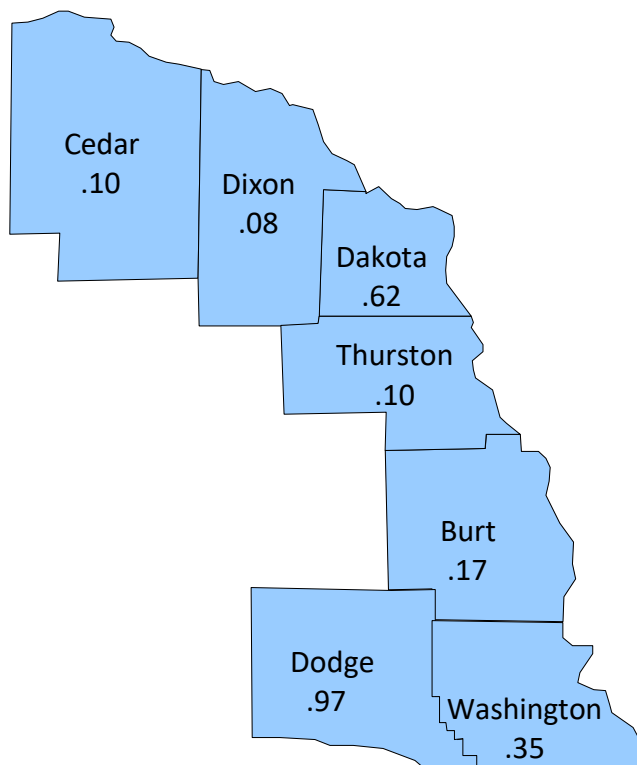
6th Judicial District – District Court

District court need for judges: 2.39

Current number of judges: 3

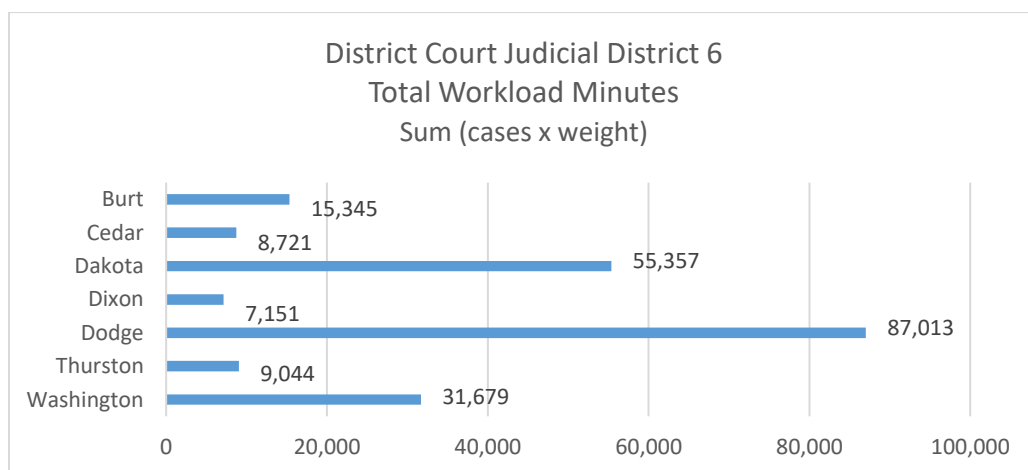
Workload per judge: 0.80

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Judges Serving the 6th District

Hall
Meisner
Blackman



Weighted Caseload Report

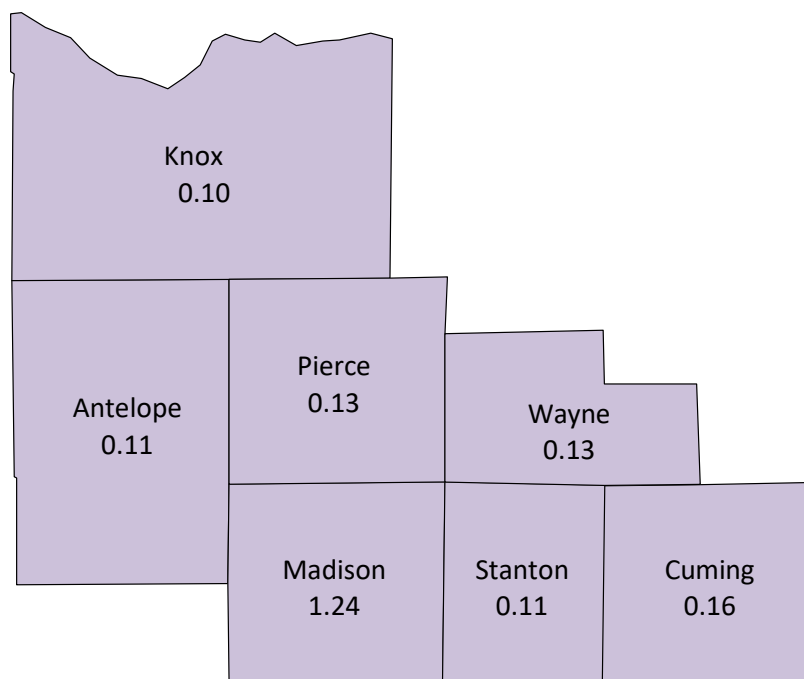
7th Judicial District – District Court

District court need for judges: 1.98

Current number of judges: 2

Workload per judge: 0.99

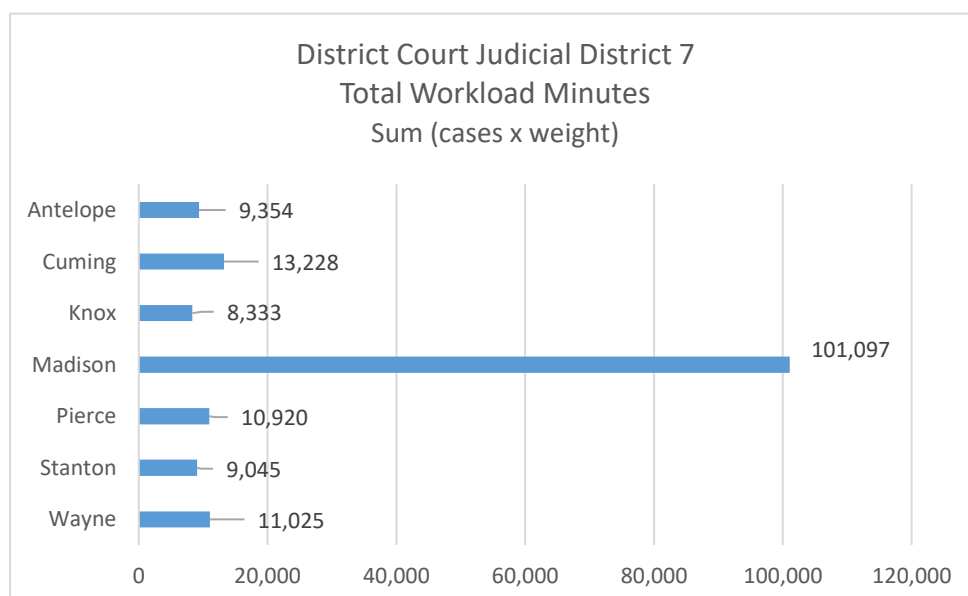
Predicted judicial resources need by county



Judges Serving the 7th District

Long (Johnson)

Kube

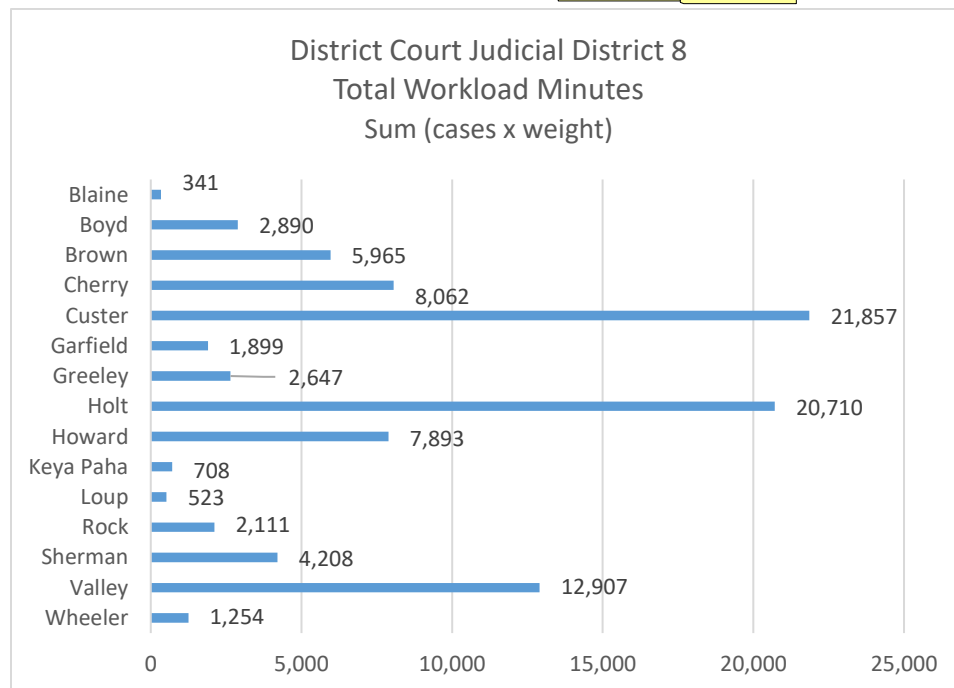
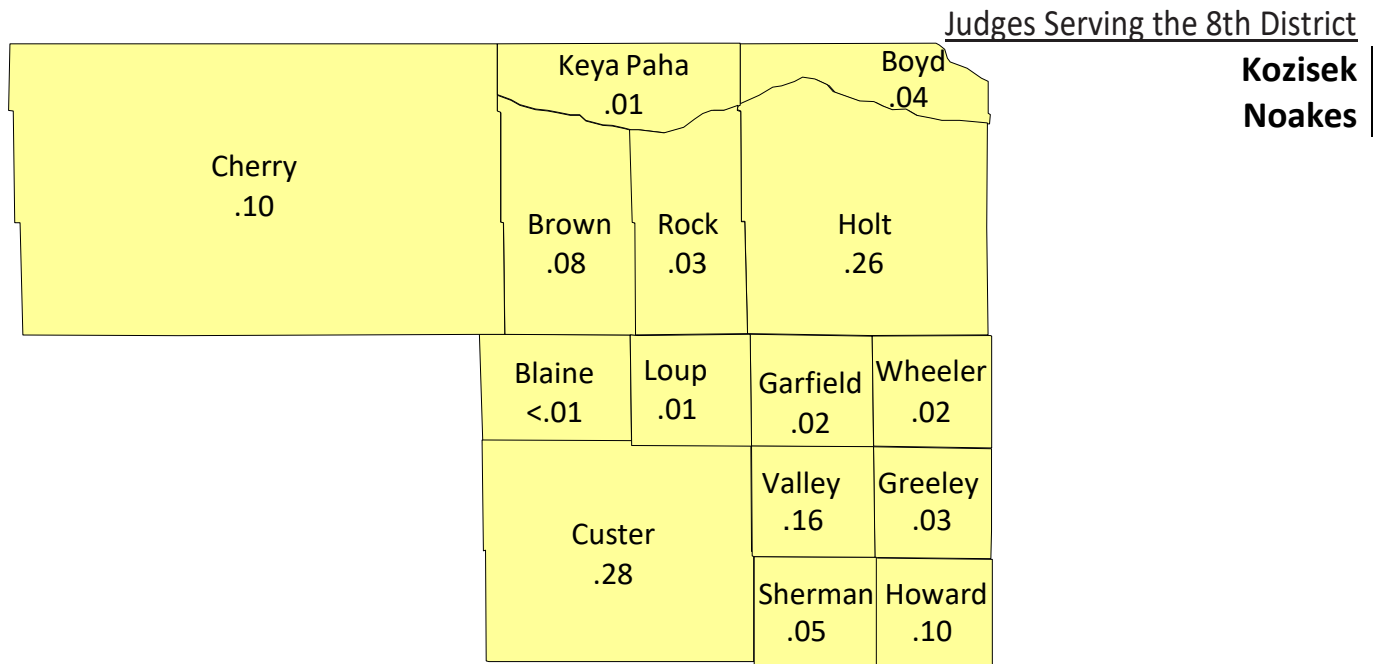


Weighted Caseload Report

8th Judicial District – District Court

District court need for judges: 1.19
 Current number of judges: 2
 Workload per judge: 0.60

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Weighted Caseload Report

9th Judicial District – District Court

District court need for judges: 3.60
Current number of judges: 4
Workload per judge: 0.90

Predicted judicial resources need by county

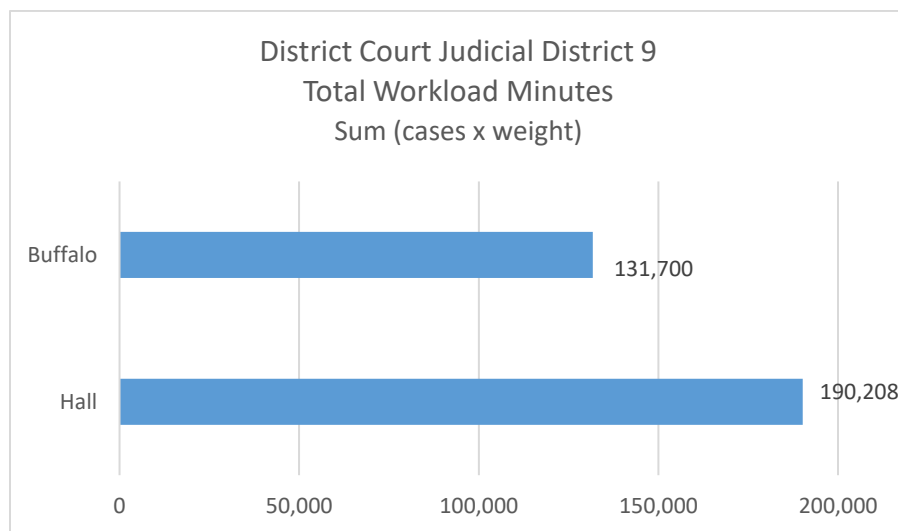
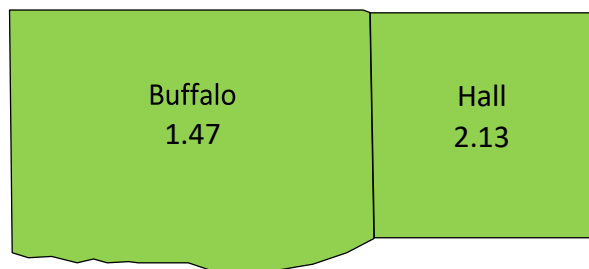
Judges Serving the 9th District

Butler

Lee

Marsh

Ramsey (Carson)

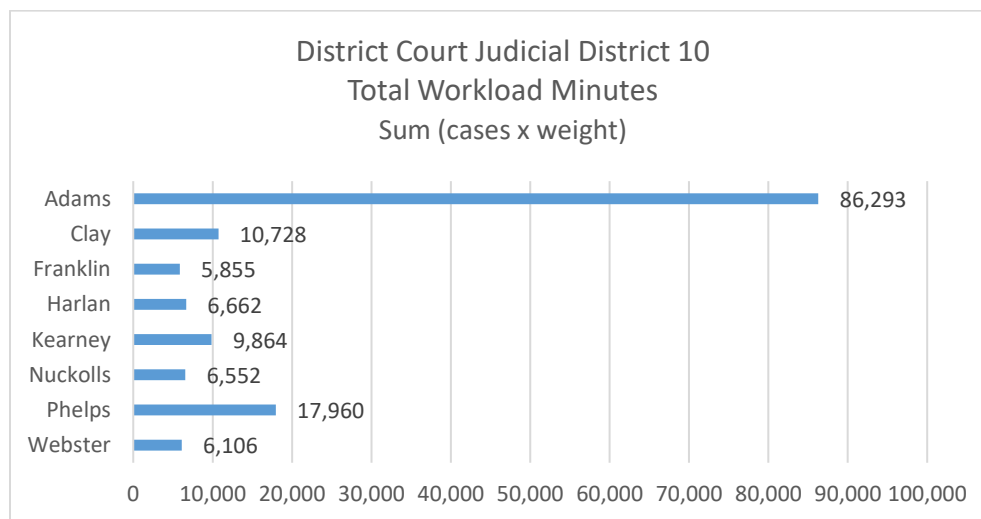
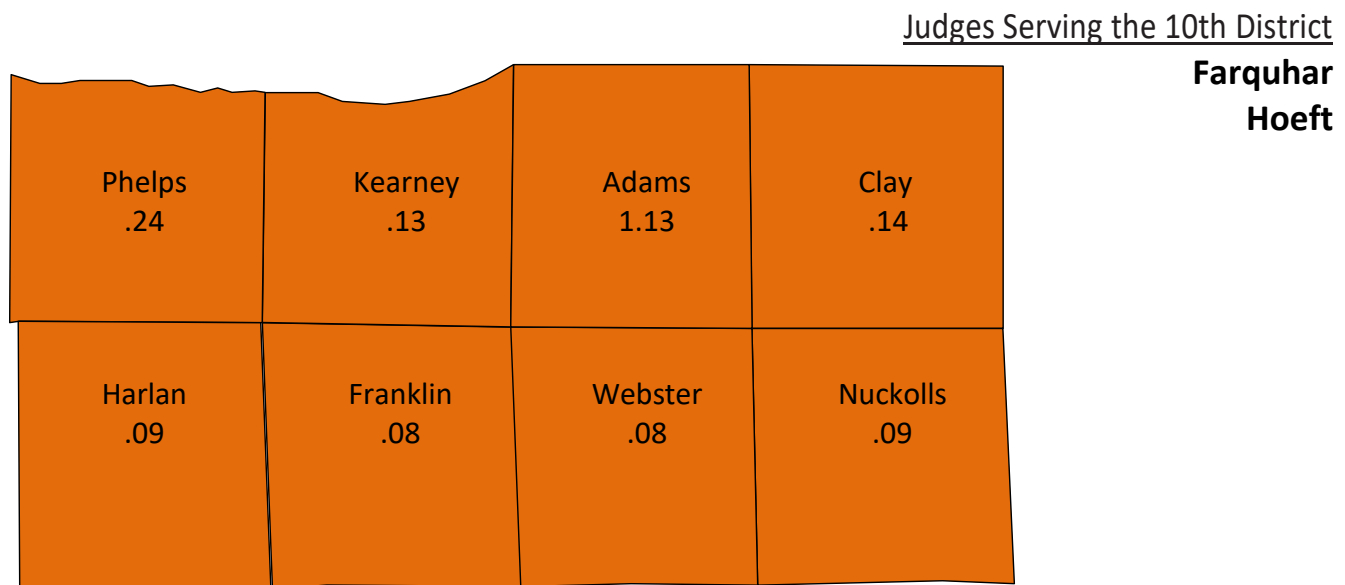


Weighted Caseload Report

10th Judicial District – District Court

District court need for judges: 1.98
 Current number of judges: 2
 Workload per judge: 0.99

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Weighted Caseload Report

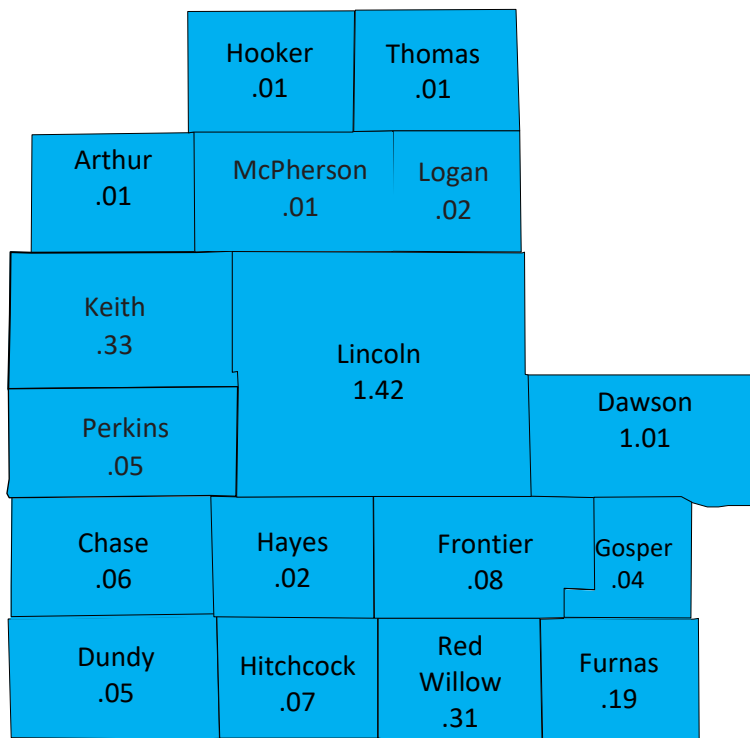
11th Judicial District – District Court

District court need for judges: 3.69

Current number of judges: 4

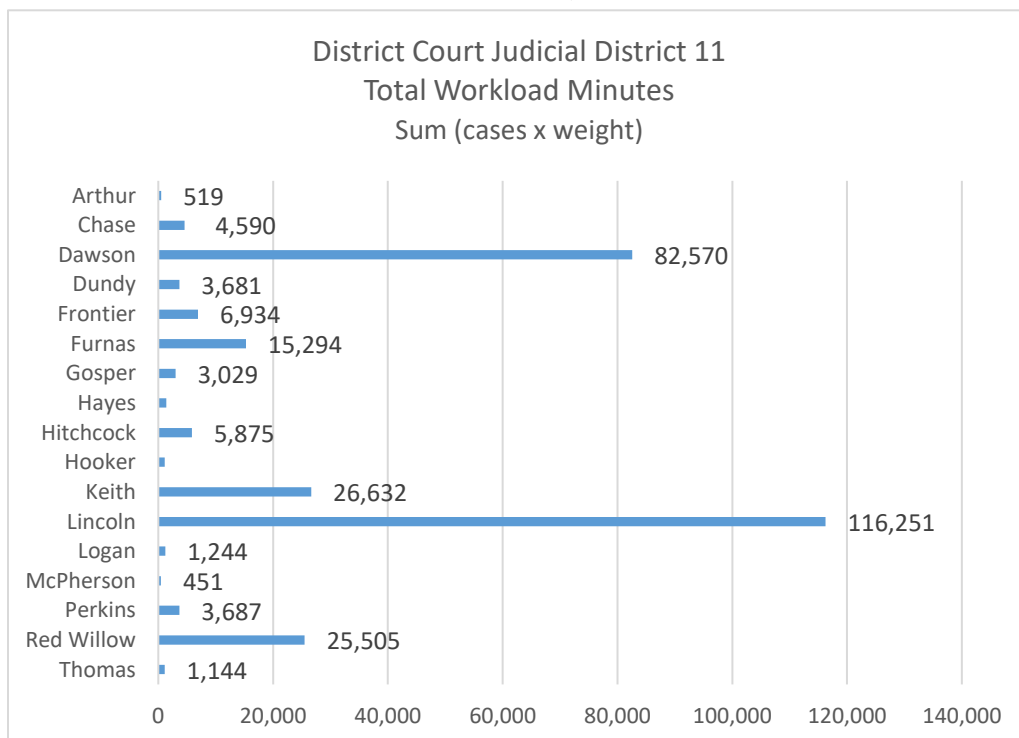
Workload per judge: 0.92

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Judges Serving the 11th District

Heng
Vacant (Neher)
Piccolo
Volkmer



Weighted Caseload Report

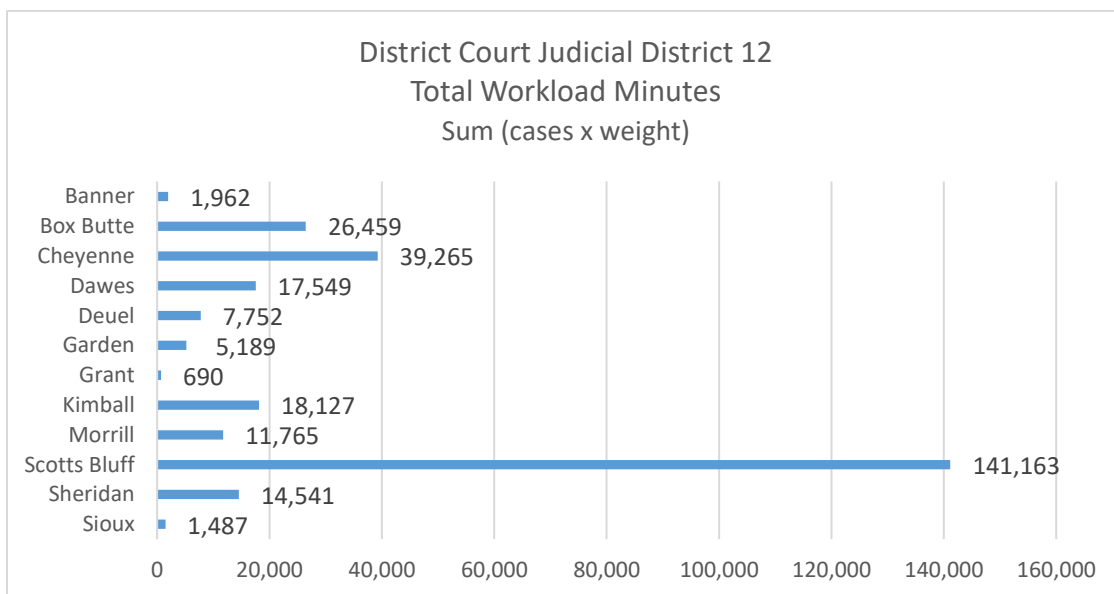
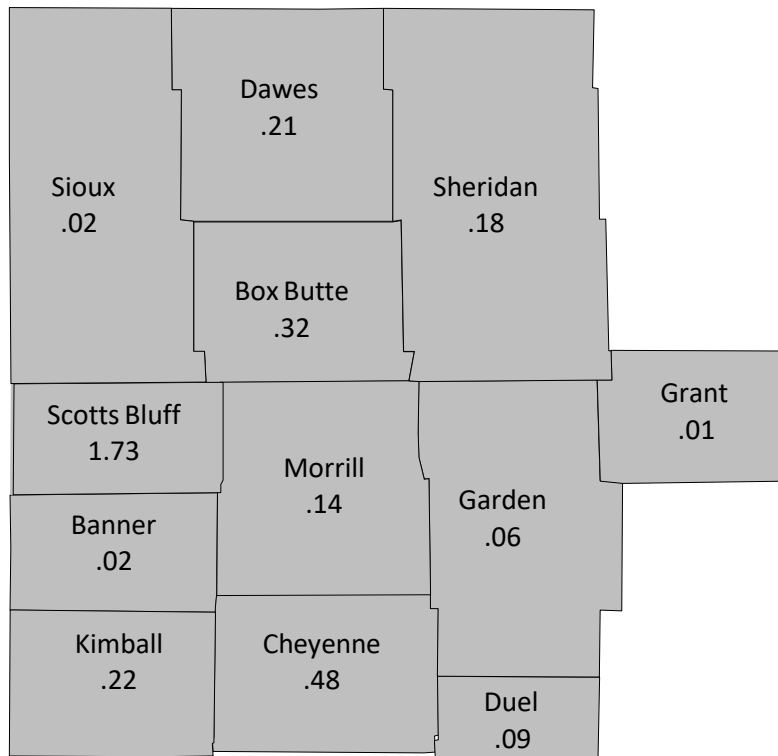
12th Judicial District – District Court

District court need for judges: 3.48
 Current number of judges: 4
 Workload per judge: 0.87

Predicted judicial resources need by county

Judges Serving the 12th District

Dobrovolny
Miller
O’Gorman
Weimer



Weighted Caseload Report

Court Case Type Categories and Weights – Appendix

District Court Case Types	Case Weight* (minutes)
Problem Solving Court Cases	683
Protection Orders	32
Civil	219
Class I Felony	367
Other Criminal	149
Domestic Relations	97
Appeals	343
Administrative Appeals	540
County Court Case Types	Case Weight* (minutes)
Protection Orders	32
Felony	26
Misdemeanor	23
District Court: Adult Problem-Solving Court	683
Traffic	1
Civil	8
Probate	61
Guardianship/Conservatorship	133
Small Claims	30
Adoption	92
Domestic Relations	97
Juvenile: 3A Children	487
Juvenile: Delinquency	100
Juvenile: Status Offender 3B	37
Juvenile: Mentally Ill and Dangerous 3C	265
Juvenile: Bridge to Independence (B21)	58
Juvenile: Interstate Compact Hearings/Filings	2
Juvenile: Problem-Solving Court Cases	654
Separate Juvenile Court Case Types	Case Weight* (minutes)
Adoption	49
Domestic Relations	26
Juvenile: 3A Children	487
Delinquency	136
Status Offender 3B	54
Mentally Ill and Dangerous 3C	265
Bridge to Independence B21	36
Interstate Compact Hearing/Filings	2
Problem Solving Court Cases	654



Research and Data

Operations Division

Administrative Office of the Courts & Probation

Chief Standing Bear Justice Administration Building

521 S. 14th Street Suite 300 | Lincoln, NE 68508

T 531.739.8100 | F 402.471.2197

County Courts

Weighted Caseload Report



Fiscal Year 2025

July 1, 2024, to
June 30, 2025



EXHIBIT 08

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Weighted Caseload Report

Nebraska County Courts Weighted Caseload Report

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Corey R. Steel

Nebraska State Court Administrator

Nebraska Supreme Court

Administrative Office of the Courts & Probation

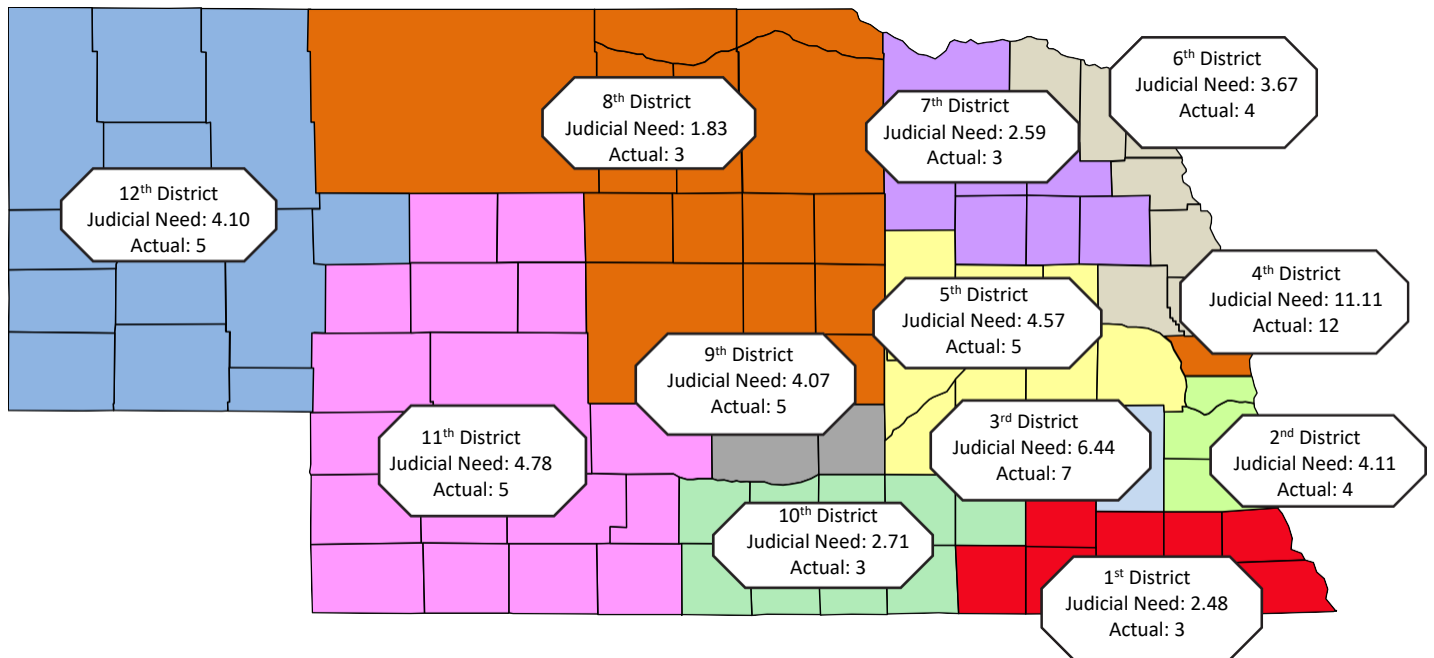
Rm. 1211 State Capitol | P.O. Box 98910 | Lincoln, NE 68509

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www.supremecourt.nebraska.gov

Weighted Caseload Report

Nebraska County Court Judicial Needs Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)



Note: Differences between the total District Court Need for Judges and the sum of individual counties is due to rounding to the nearest one-hundredth.

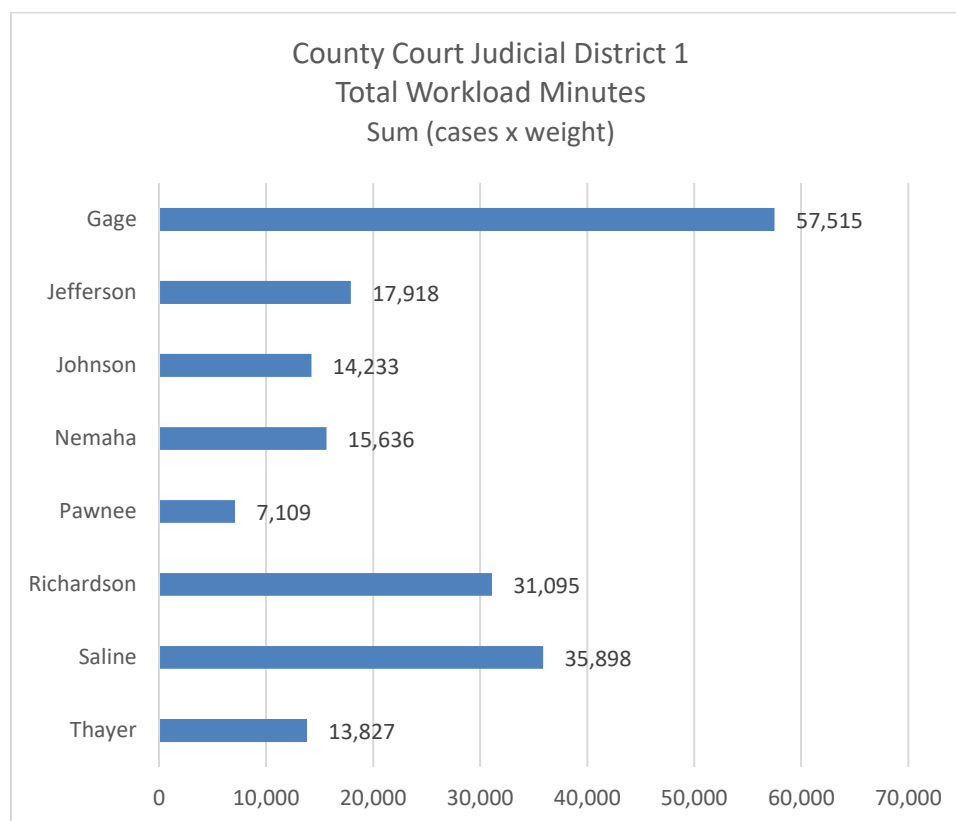
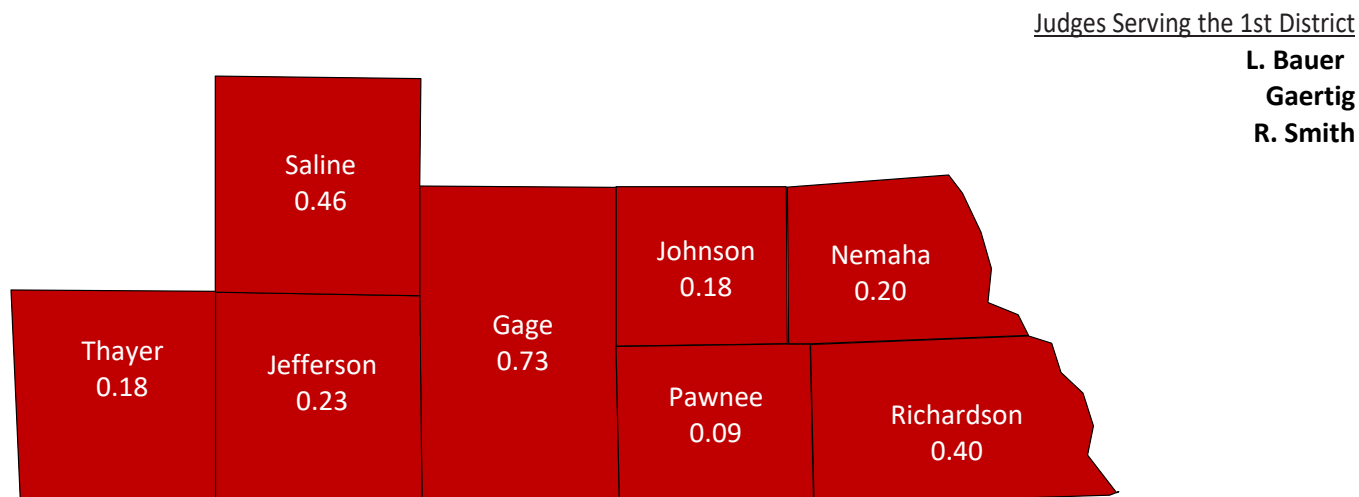
Weighted Caseload Report

1st Judicial District – County Court

County court need for judges: 2.48
 Current number of judges: 3
 Workload per judge: 0.83

NOTE: An additional **0.01** is given due to Judge R. Smith being assigned to Problem-Solving Court cases in Fillmore County (District Court) and Otoe County (District Court).

Predicted judicial resources need by county

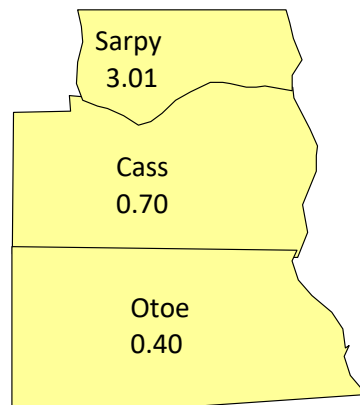


Weighted Caseload Report

2nd Judicial District – County Court

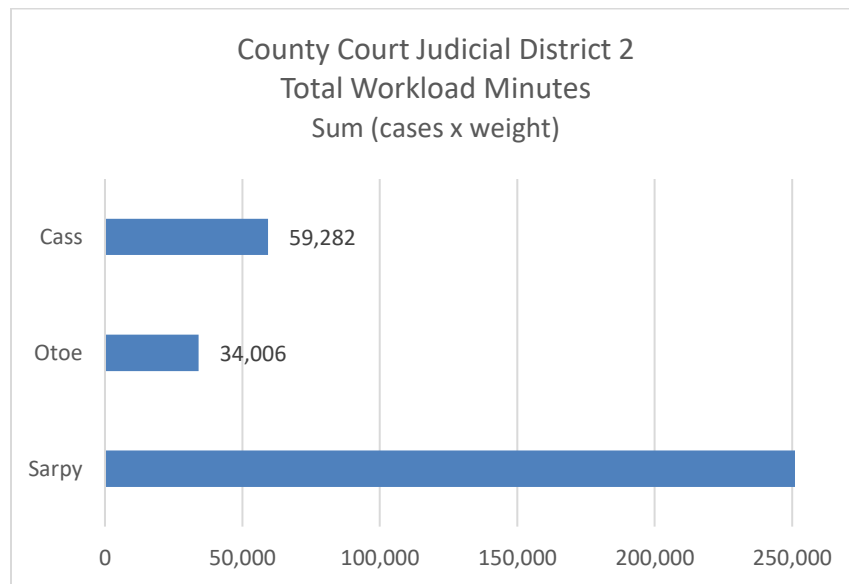
County court need for judges: 4.11
 Current number of judges: 4
 Workload per judge: 1.03

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Judges Serving the 2nd District

Freeman
Hutton
Palm
Partsch



Weighted Caseload Report

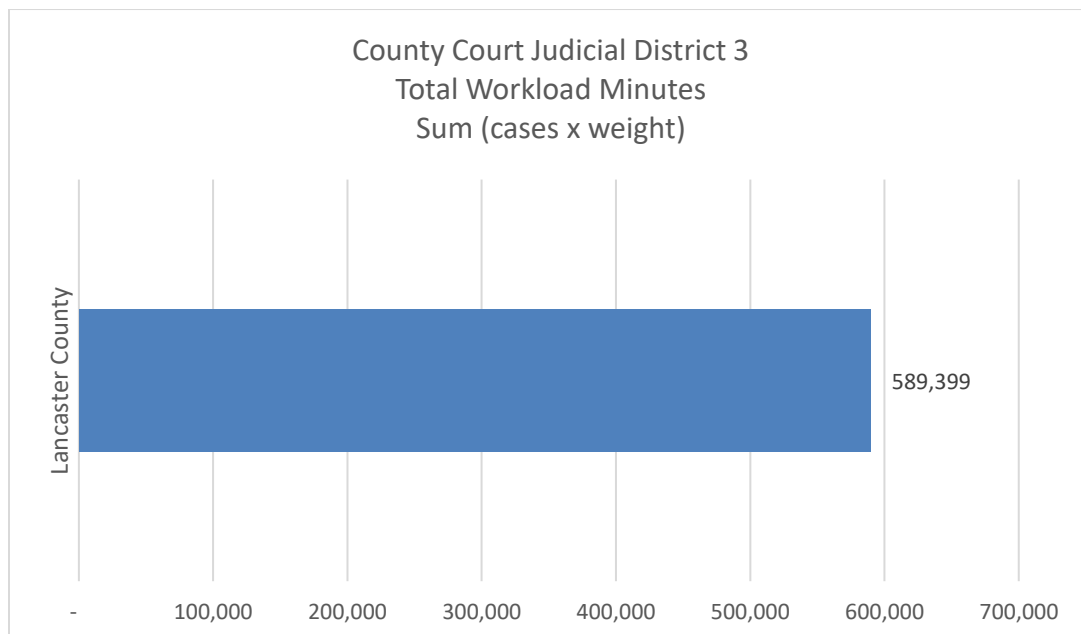
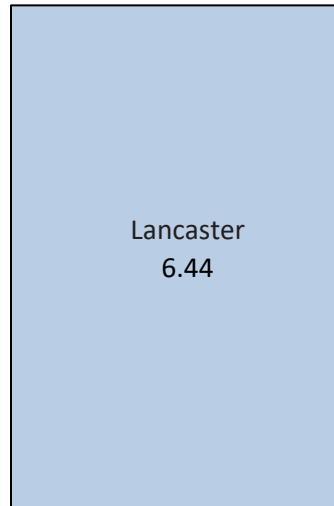
3rd Judicial District –County Court

County court need for judges: 6.44
 Current number of judges: 7
 Workload per judge: 0.92

Predicted judicial resources need by county

Judges Serving the 3rd District

Acton
Dalton
Parsley
Phillips
Reuter
Yardley
Zimmerman



Weighted Caseload Report

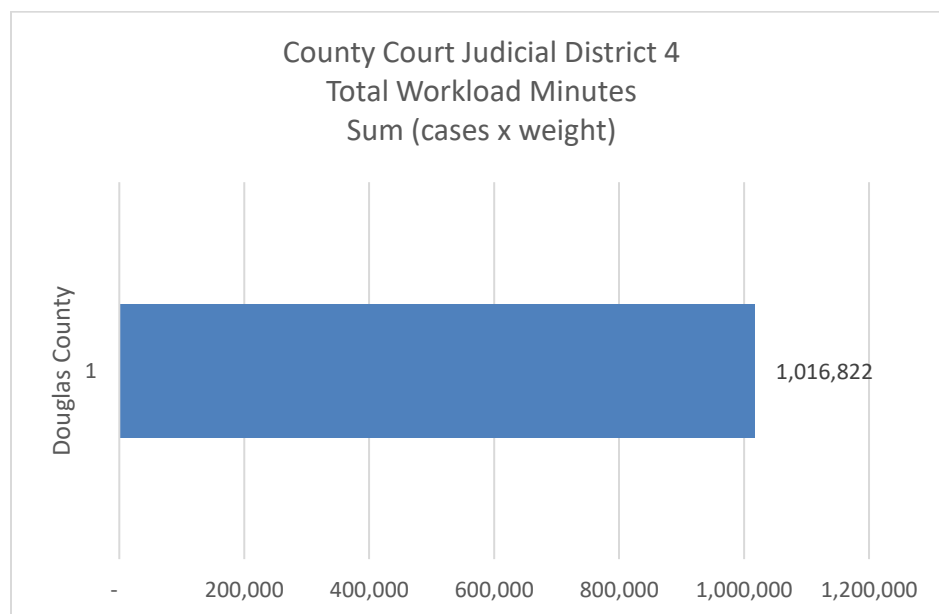
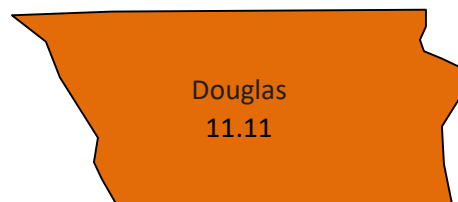
4th Judicial District –County Court

County court need for judges: 11.11
 Current number of judges: 12
 Workload per judge: 0.93

Predicted judicial resources need by county

Judges Serving the 4th District

Finley
Forsberg
Hansen
Harmon
Hendrix
Huber
Keim
Kleine (Marcuzzo)
Lohaus
McDermott
Mosby (Lowe)
Shearer

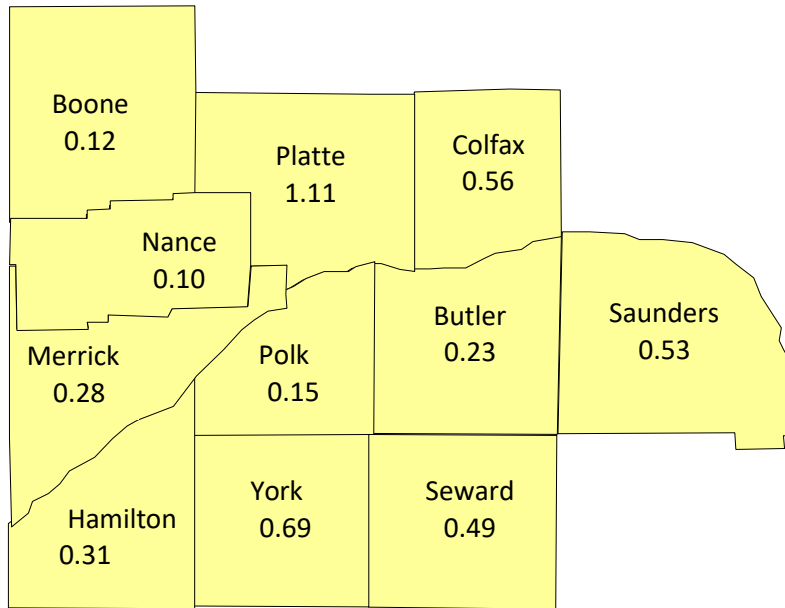


Weighted Caseload Report

5th Judicial District - County Court

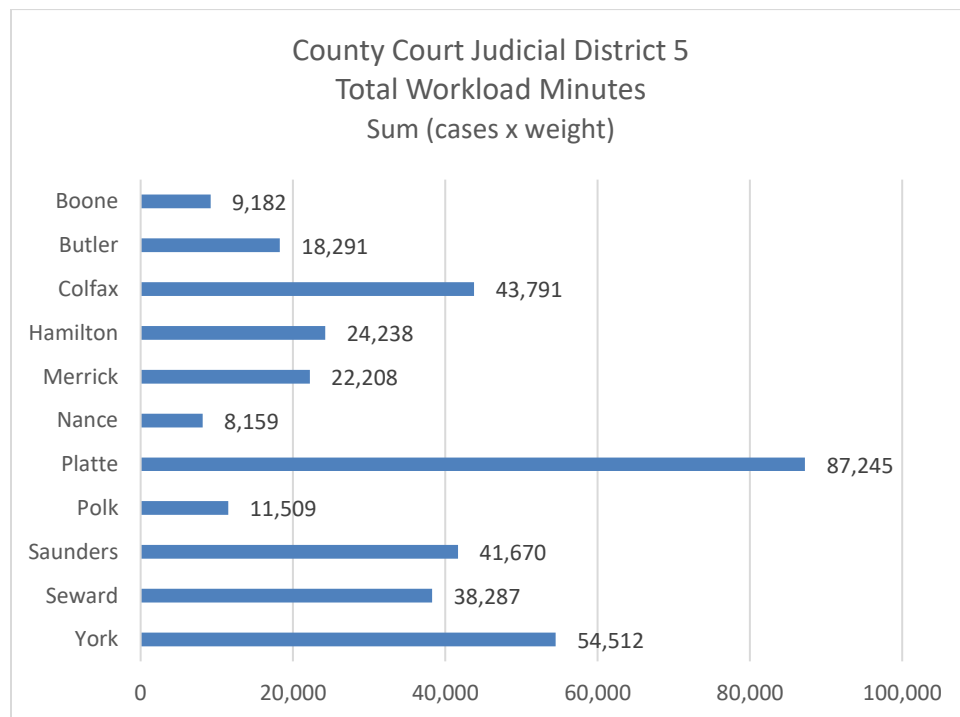
County court need for judges: 4.57
 Current number of judges: 5
 Workload per judge: 0.91

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Judges Serving the 5th District

Homolka
Kraci
Lange
Petersen
Twiss

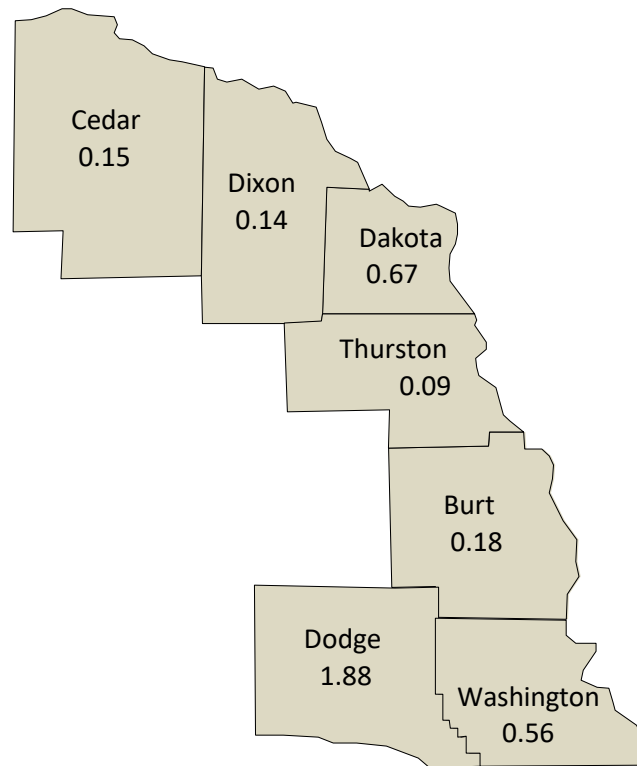


Weighted Caseload Report

6th Judicial District – County Court

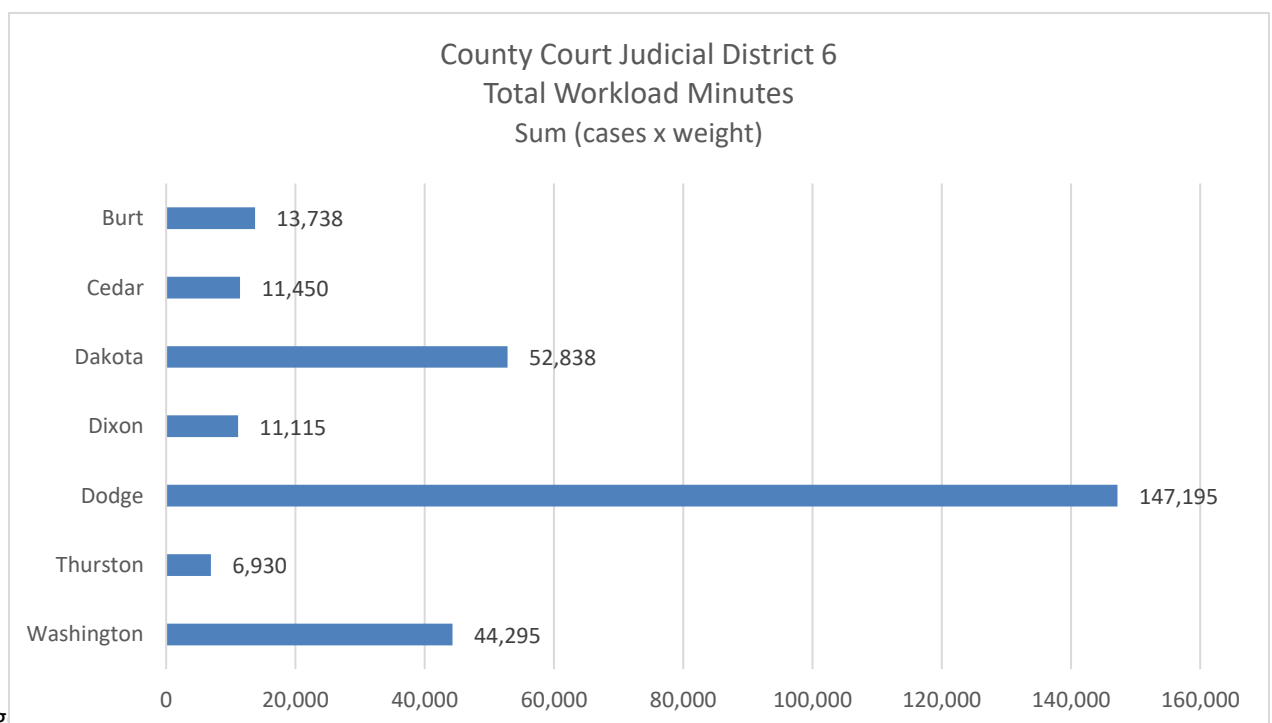
County court need for judges: 3.67
Current number of judges: 4
Workload per judge: 0.92

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Judges Serving the 6th District

Barron
S. Bauer
Klein
Matney

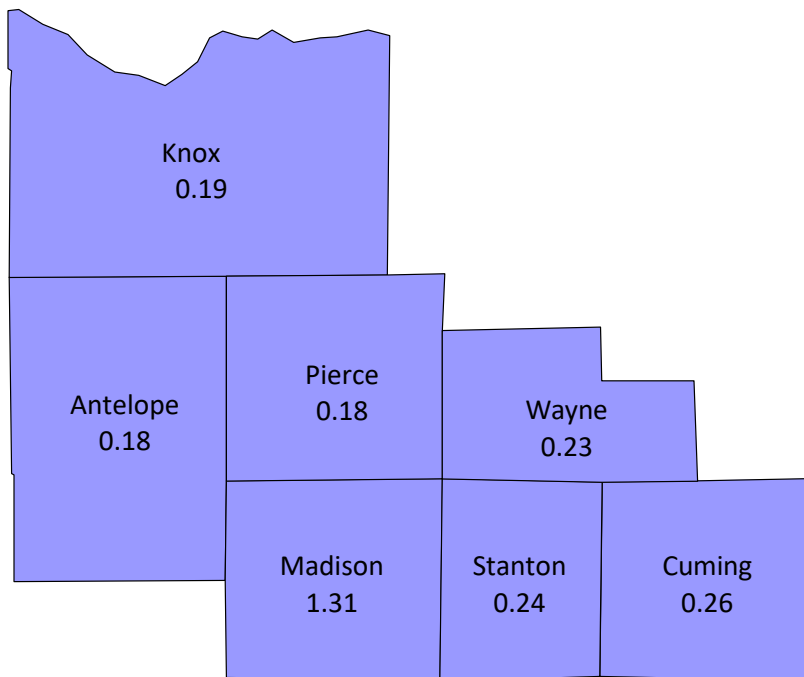


Weighted Caseload Report

7th Judicial District – County Court

County court need for judges: 2.59
 Current number of judges: 3
 Workload per judge: 0.86

Predicted judicial resources need by county

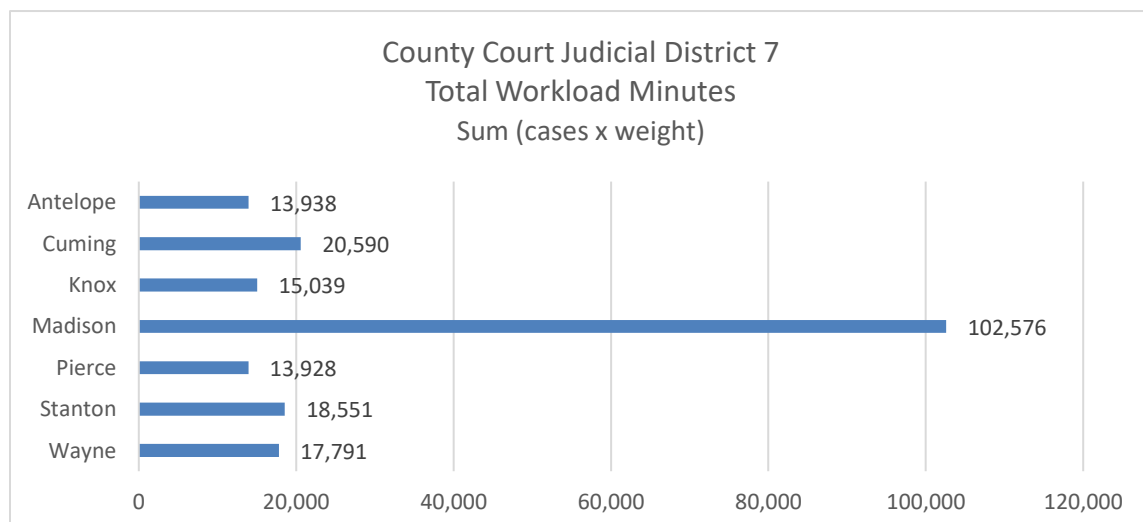


Judges Serving the 7th District

Vacant (Long)

Stoffer

Taylor

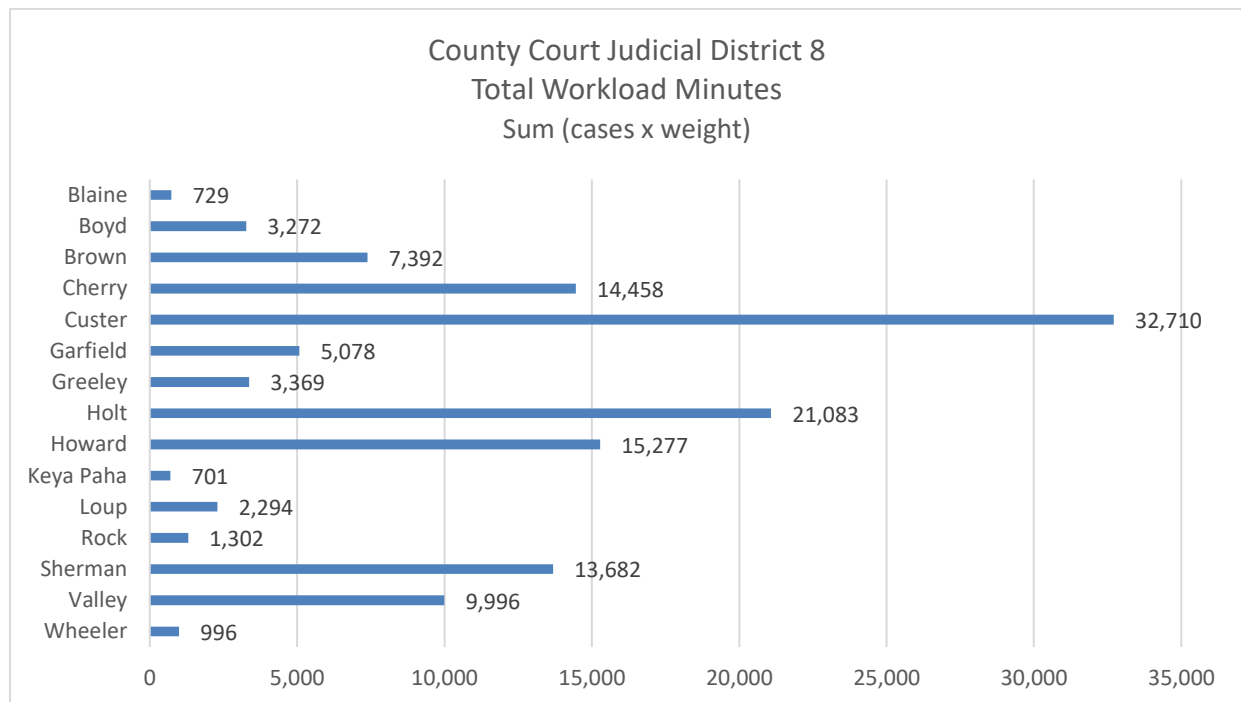
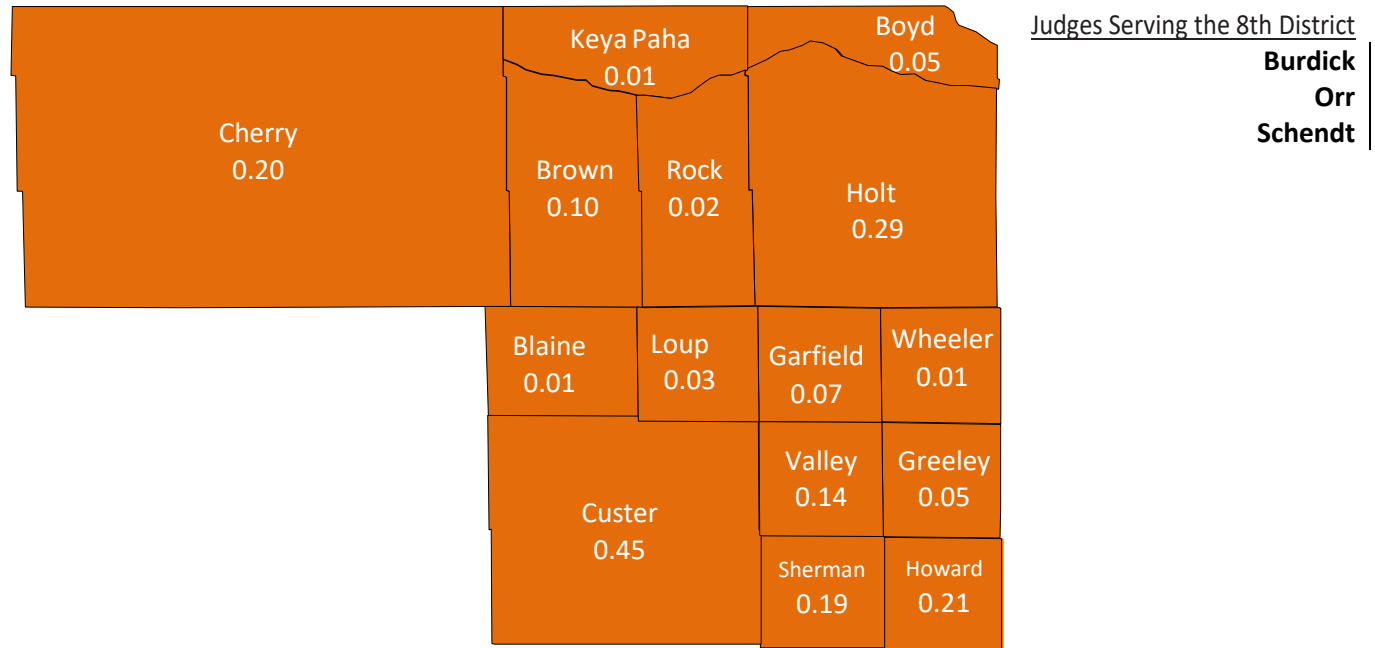


Weighted Caseload Report

8th Judicial District – County Court

County court need for judges: 1.83
 Current number of judges: 3
 Workload per judge: 0.61

Predicted judicial resources need by county

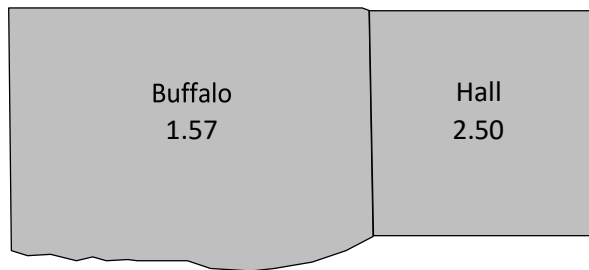


Weighted Caseload Report

9th Judicial District – County Court

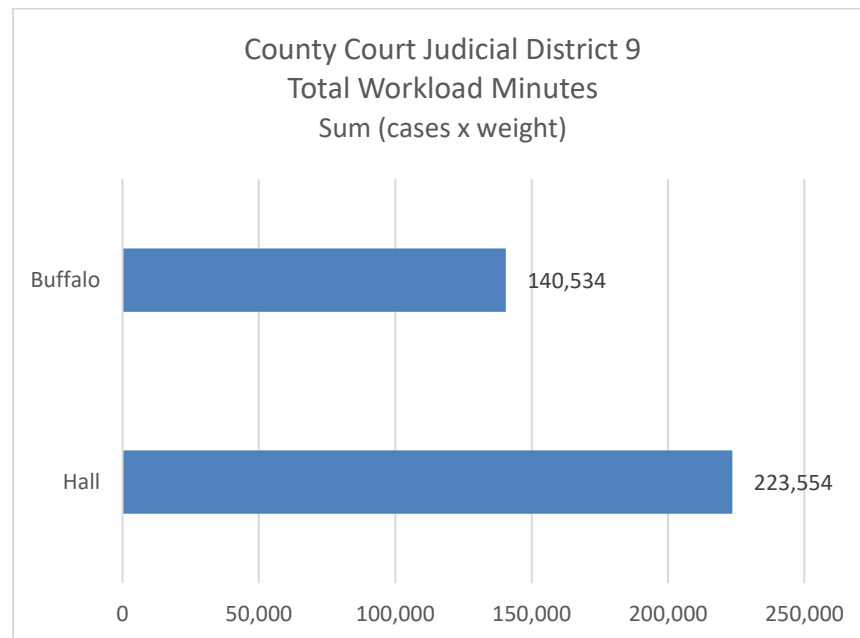
County court need for judges: 4.07
Current number of judges: 5
Workload per judge: 0.81

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Judges Serving the 9th District

**Corey
Jorgensen
McQuay
Rademacher
Wetzel**



Weighted Caseload Report

10th Judicial District – County Court

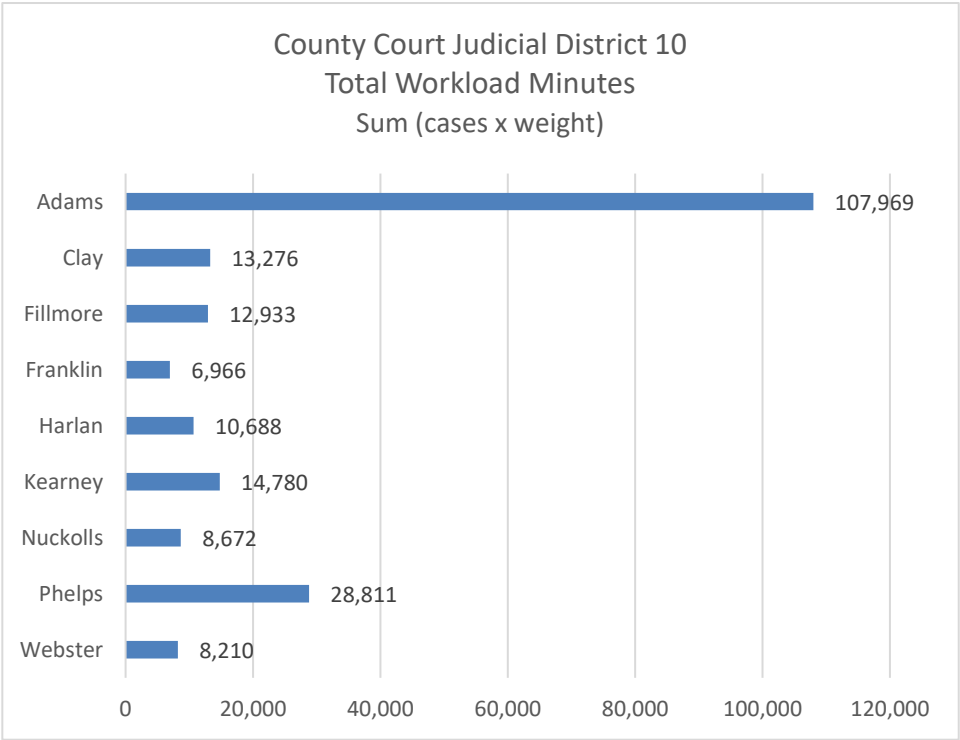
County court need for judges: 2.71
Current number of judges: 3
Workload per judge: 0.90

Predicted judicial resources need by county

Phelps 0.37	Kearney 0.19	Adams 1.38	Clay 0.17	Fillmore 0.16
Harlan 0.14	Franklin 0.09	Webster 0.10	Nuckolls 0.11	

Judges Serving the 10th District

Burns
Mead
Nelsen-Pacey (Hoeft)

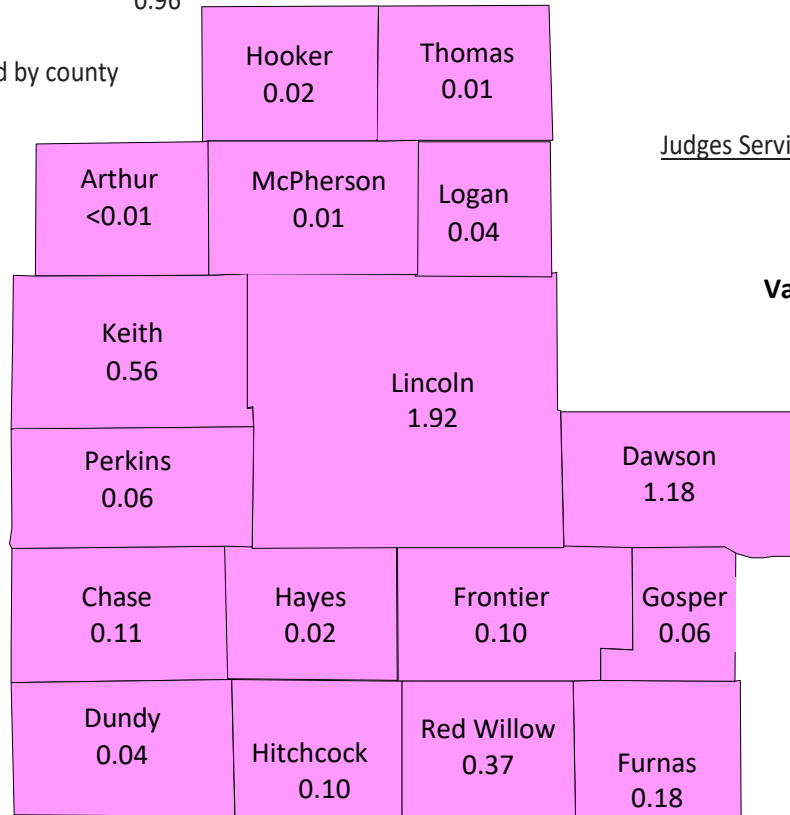


Weighted Caseload Report

11th Judicial District – County Court

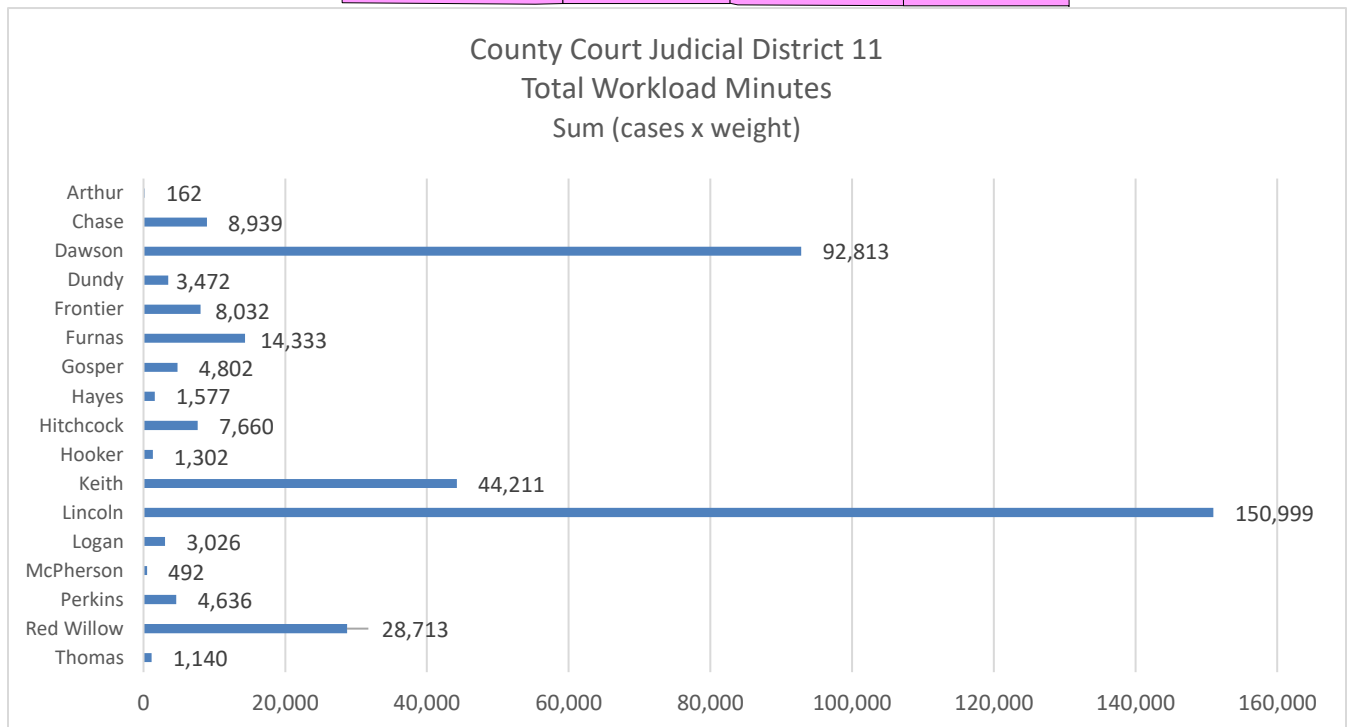
County court need for judges: 4.78
 Current number of judges: 5
 Workload per judge: 0.96

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Judges Serving the 11th District

Jay
 Paine
 Roberts-Connick
 Vacant (Steenburg)
 Wightman

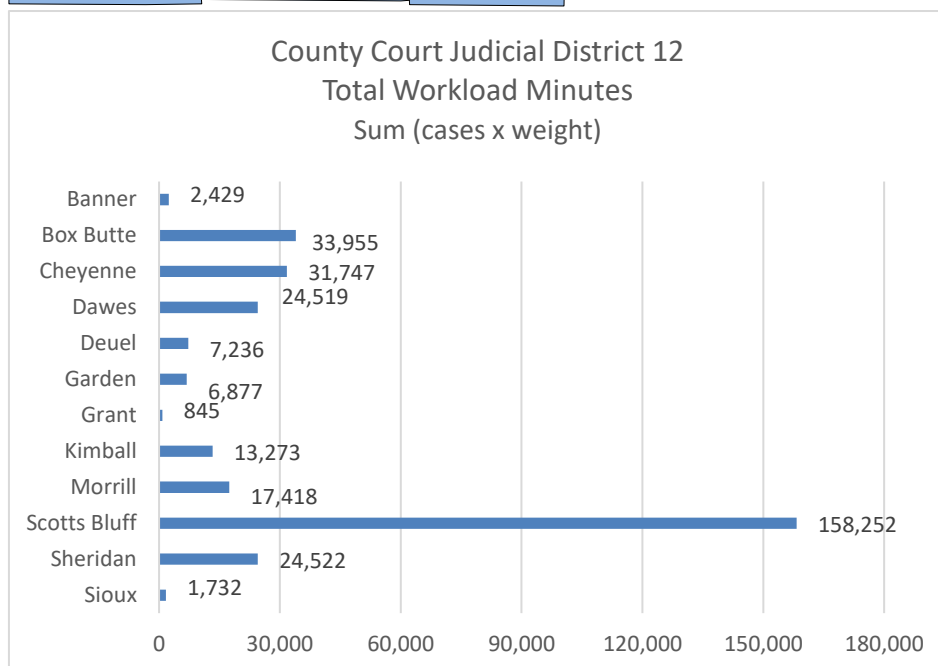
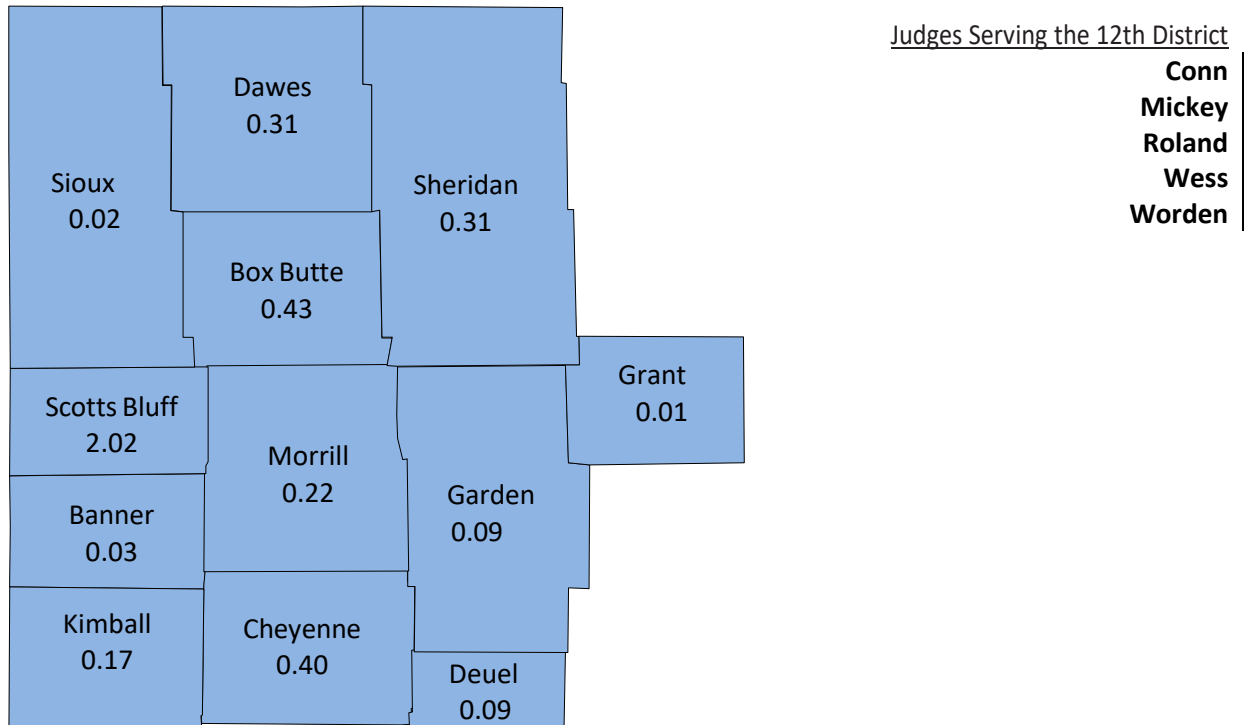


Weighted Caseload Report

12th Judicial District – County Court

County court need for judges: 4.10
Current number of judges: 5
Workload per judge: 0.82

Predicted judicial resources need by county



Weighted Caseload Report

Court Case Type Categories and Weights – Appendix

District Court Case Types	Case Weight* (minutes)
Problem Solving Court Cases	683
Protection Orders	32
Civil	219
Class I Felony	367
Other Criminal	149
Domestic Relations	97
Appeals	343
Administrative Appeals	540
County Court Case Types	Case Weight* (minutes)
Protection Orders	32
Felony	26
Misdemeanor	23
District Court: Adult Problem-Solving Court	683
Traffic	1
Civil	8
Probate	61
Guardianship/Conservatorship	133
Small Claims	30
Adoption	92
Domestic Relations	97
Juvenile: 3A Children	487
Juvenile: Delinquency	100
Juvenile: Status Offender 3B	37
Juvenile: Mentally Ill and Dangerous 3C	265
Juvenile: Bridge to Independence (B21)	58
Juvenile: Interstate Compact Hearings/Filings	2
Juvenile: Problem-Solving Court Cases	654
Separate Juvenile Court Case Types	Case Weight* (minutes)
Adoption	49
Domestic Relations	26
Juvenile: 3A Children	487
Delinquency	136
Status Offender 3B	54
Mentally Ill and Dangerous 3C	265
Bridge to Independence B21	36
Interstate Compact Hearing/Filings	2
Problem Solving Court Cases	654



Research and Data

**Operations Division
Administrative Office of the Courts & Probation
Chief Standing Bear Justice Administration Building
521 S. 14th Street Suite 300 | Lincoln, NE 68508
T 531.739.8100 | F 402.471.2197**



State of Nebraska
District Court of Nebraska
Fourth Judicial District

JUDGE LEANNE M. SRB
HALL OF JUSTICE
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68183-0410
402-444-6936
FAX 402-996-8010

AMANDA VODVARKA
BAILIFF

MARY MCKEEVER RPR, CRR
STENOGRAPHER

July 22, 2025
Judicial Resources Commission
c/o Kara Nielsen
State Capital Building
P.O. Box 98910
Lincoln, NE 68509
Kara.nielsen@nejudicial.gov

RE: Request to Declare Judicial Vacancy

Dear Justice Jonathan J. Papik and Members of the Commission:

Please accept this letter as written testimony in support of the request of the Judges of the Fourth Judicial district Court that the Judicial Resources Commission determine the existence of a judicial vacancy in the District Court of the Fourth Judicial District. The vacancy is due to the retirement of Judge. Leigh Ann Retelsdorf effective June 2025.

When a Judge retires, other District Judges manage the retired Judge's cases, in addition to their own cases, until the Judicial Resources Commission declares a vacancy and a Judge is appointed.

Additionally, the 2024 Nebraska Judicial Branch Weighted Caseload Report concluded this District Court has a need for **18.96 judges**. The 2024 Annual Fiscal Year Caseload Report for the Fourth Judicial District Court reflects the existence of over 12,300 cases filed for the 2024 fiscal year. These numbers reflect the trend this judicial district is experiencing in attaining pre-COVID level case filings. By category for fiscal year, 2024 are as follows:

Criminal Felony Class 1:	491
Criminal Other:	3,355
Problem Solving Court:	185
Domestic Relations:	3,760
Protection Orders:	2,344
Civil:	2,094
Appellate Action:	61
Administrative Appeals:	14
TOTAL CASES:	12,304

EXHIBIT 09

Accordingly, the Judges of the Fourth Judicial District Court respectfully request that the Judicial Resources Commission declare that a judicial vacancy exists in the District Court of the Fourth Judicial District due to the retirement of Judge Leigh Ann Retelsdorf.

Please accept this letter as submitted testimony from the District Court of the Fourth Judicial District in support of declaring a vacancy.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Very Sincerely Yours,



LeAnne M. Srb
Presiding Judge
Fourth Judicial District

CC: Judge Peter C. Bataillon
Judge J. Russell Derr
Judge Marlon A. Polk
Judge Timothy P. Burns
Judge Duane C. Dougherty
Judge Kimberly Miller Pankonin
Judge Shelly R. Stratman
Judge Horacio J. Wheelock
Judge James M. Mastellar
Judge Tressa M. Alioth
Judge T. Olon Engleman
Judge Jeffrey J. Lux
Judge Molly B. Keane
Judge Katie L. Benson
Judge Derek R. Vaughn
Judge Ryan M. Lindberg
Sheri Larsen, Douglas County District Court Administrator

Nebraska State Bar Association

"Helping lawyers help people"



August 7, 2025

Hon. John R. Freudenberg
Nebraska Supreme Court
State Capitol, #2210
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Justice Freudenberg:

On behalf of the NSBA Judicial Resources Committee ("the Committee"), I wish to convey to the members of the Judicial Resources Commission our recommendation regarding the vacancies in the County Court in the 2nd District due to the appointment of Judge Freeman to the Nebraska Court of Appeals, the County Court in the 3rd Judicial District due to the retirement of Judge Yardley, the vacancy in the District Court due to the retirement of Judge Rettlesdorf, and the vacancy in the County Court in the 7th Judicial District due to the appointment of Judge Long to the District Court.

After reviewing the Judicial Weighted Caseload Reports ("Judicial Workload Assessment") for FY 2025, the Committee concluded that the State's justice system will not have adequate judicial resources available unless the current vacancies are filled expeditiously. Therefore, the Committee recommends filling:

- 1) The vacancy in the 2nd Judicial District County Court created by the appointment of Judge Freeman to the Nebraska Court of Appeals with the primary office location in Sarpy County;
- 2) The vacancy in the 3rd Judicial District, County Court due to the retirement of Judge Yardley with the primary office location in Lancaster County;
- 3) The vacancy in the 4th Judicial District, District Court created by the retirement of Judge Rettlesdorf with the primary office location in Douglas County; and
- 4) The vacancy in the 7th Judicial District, County Court created by the appointment of Judge Long to the District Court with the primary office location in Madison County.

Thank you for your consideration of the recommendations set forth herein. Please include this letter with the materials provided to Judicial Resources Commission members before your August 15th meeting.

Sincerely,

Hon. John M. Gerrard
NSBA President-Elect

Cc: Corey Steel
Liz Neeley

August 12, 2025

The Honorable John Freudenberg, Chairperson
Judicial Resources Commission
P.O. Box 98901
State Capital Building
Lincoln, NE 68509-8910

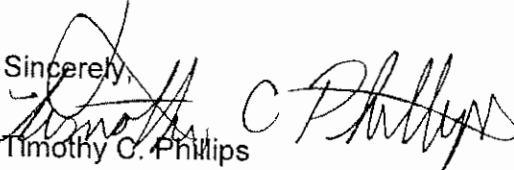
Re: Judicial Resources Commission Hearing, August 15, 2025

Dear Justice Freudenberg:

The Lancaster County Court judges request the Judicial Resource Commission find that a judicial vacancy exists in the office of the County Court of the 3rd Judicial District, as a result of the retirement of the Honorable Laurie J. Yardley. We further request that the Judicial Resources Commission make a recommendation that the position remain in the 3rd Judicial District.

Please find twenty (20) copies of a memorandum to be distributed to the members of the Judicial Resources Commission prior to the upcoming hearing. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,


Timothy C. Phillips

Lancaster County Court Presiding Judge

Enclosures:

Cc: Judges Matthew Acton, Holly Parsley, Thomas Zimmerman, Rodney Reuter and Joseph Dalton

EXHIBIT 11

To: Nebraska Judicial Resources Commission
% The Honorable John Freudenberg, Chairperson
From: Timothy C. Phillips, Lancaster County Court Presiding Judge
Date: August 11, 2025 (Amended Memorandum)
Re: Nebraska Judicial Resources Commission Hearing – August 15, 2025

History of the Court

From 1985 through 2011, the Lancaster County Court operated with six judges even though the caseload grew from 44,000 cases in 1985 to 63,905 cases in 2011. In 2011, the Weighted Caseload Report indicated that Lancaster County should have 7.93 judges to handle its caseload. Accordingly, in 2011 the Commission made a recommendation (and in 2012 legislation was passed) to transfer a county judicial position from the Fifth Judicial District to the Third, giving the Lancaster County Court seven judges. Since that time, the weighted caseload studies continue to show that Lancaster County needs at least seven judges. Nine of the past 11 years Lancaster County's Judicial Need has been anywhere between 6.16 to 7.84 judges. COVID recovery years of 2022 and 2023 are the two outlier years during the last 11 years.

Current Caseload Statistics

The Fiscal Year 2024 County Court Annual Caseload Report shows that Lancaster County had 46,363 cases filed in the 2024 Fiscal Year. That figure includes 440 District Court domestic and/or protection order cases also handled by the Lancaster County Court (See attached Exhibit A). The most recent Weighted Caseload Report (FY 2025 July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025) shows that Lancaster County Court had 46,355 cases filed with that number including 414 domestic and/or protection order cases also handled by the Lancaster County Court (See attached Exhibit A). The latest weighted caseload report indicates that Lancaster County needs 6.44 judges and has 7 judges currently assigned. (See attached Exhibit B). The latest Caseload Report shows that the number of filings is steadily increasing as we become further removed from the COVID pandemic. We anticipate that the number of filings will continue to increase as we move further away from the 2022 and 2023 fiscal years. The number of cases filed in the Lancaster County Court through July of 2025 would indicate that we are on track to have about 1400 more cases filed by this calendar year's end than were filed in the last calendar year. (See attached Exhibit C).

Other Data to Consider

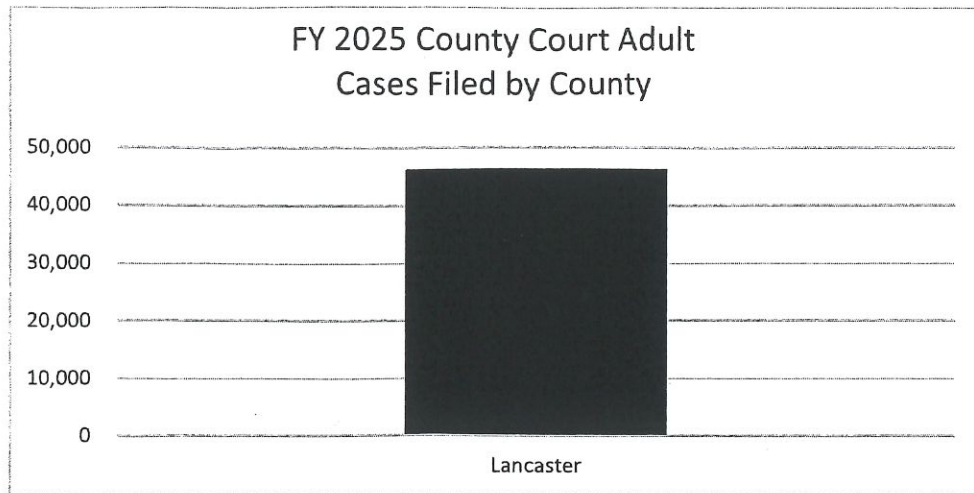
The County Judges in Lancaster County reviewed and signed 762 search warrants and the supporting affidavits during the 2024 calendar year. This number is also continuing to rise since 2021 when 663 search warrants were reviewed and signed by Lancaster County Court Judges. The 2025 calendar year, as of August 7, 2025, has seen 502 search warrants and the supporting affidavits reviewed and signed by Lancaster County Judges. This would put the County Court on pace to sign and review approximately 850 search warrants and supporting affidavits by 2025 year's end.

Request for Recommendation

We request that the open position in the 3rd District because of the retirement of the Honorable Laurie J. Yardley be filled, and that the position again be assigned to Lancaster County. The statistics cited above show that Lancaster County still has the need for seven (7) judges and that the Court should be allowed to maintain the status quo. I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions and discuss this matter in further detail at the Commission hearing. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Annual Fiscal Year Caseload Report

3rd Judicial District – County Court Adult Cases Filed



Historical Cases Filed	
Year	# Cases
FY 2021	40,329
FY 2022	35,050
FY 2023	38,450
FY 2024	46,363
FY 2025	46,355

Fiscal Year 2025 Adult Court Cases Filed by Category and County

	Protection Orders	Felony	Felony 4	Misd.	Adult PSC	Traffic	Civil	Probate	Guardianship / Conservatorship	Small Claims	Adoption	Domestic Relations	Total Cases
Lancaster	414	2,225	0	11,928	0	14,643	15,500	816	355	406	68	0	46,355



Weighted Caseload Report

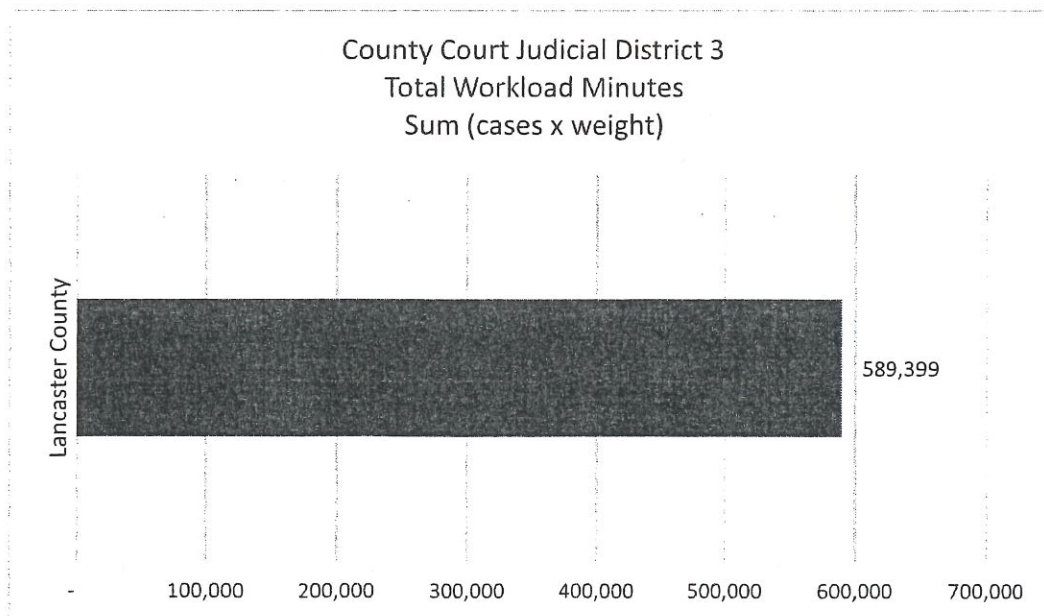
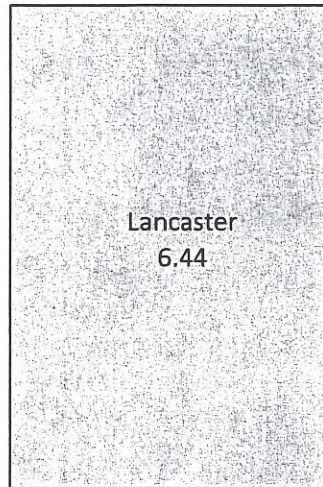
3rd Judicial District –County Court

County court need for judges: 6.44
 Current number of judges: 7
 Workload per judge: 0.92

Predicted judicial resources need by county

Judges Serving the 3rd District

Acton
 Dalton
 Parsley
 Phillips
 Reuter
 Yardley
 Zimmerman



2025 Cases Filed
Lancaster County Court

	misd/ord traffic	misd/ord nontraffic	Felony	Civil	Small Claims	Probate/ Inher Tax	Guard Cons	Adoption	Paternity	TOTALS	Protection Orders	
JAN	1126	1008	166	1260	30	67	24	8	0	3689	29	
FEB	1257	886	133	1229	29	63	26	10	0	3633	19	
MAR	1201	899	196	1219	33	74	29	10	0	3661	23	
APR	1155	921	203	1566	33	78	23	18	0	3997	39	
MAY	1349	1188	180	1091	35	86	21	11	0	3961	32	
JUN	1282	1173	209	1518	33	71	28	16	0	4330	36	
JUL	1416	1171	247	1307	42	64	26	11		4284	45	
AUG										0		
SEP										0		
OCT										0		
NOV										0		
DEC										0		
TOTAL	8786	7246	1334	9190	235	503	177	84	0	27555	223	27778
											223	27778
2024 Total:	14211	11639	2417	15730	387	835	407	149	1	45776	440	46216
	-38.17%	-37.74%	-44.81%	-41.58%	-39.28%	-39.76%	-56.51%	-43.62%		-39.80%	-49.32%	-39.90%



Lancaster County Court
Cases Filed Report
For the Month of July , 2025

Page: 1
Date: 8/ 9/2025
Time: 21:23:55

Cases Filed	Prior Pending	New Filings	Reopened Cases	Disposed Cases	Current Pending	Appealed Cases

Criminal						
Felony	1295	247	6	230	1318	0
Misdemeanor	5742	1128	53	1100	5823	4
Game & Parks	25	37	1	44	19	0
Extradition	1	6	0	5	2	0
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total Criminal	7063	1418	60	1379	7162	4
Traffic						
Statute	1211	416	0	493	1134	0
Ordinance	1420	980	2	978	1424	0
Overweight	14	19	0	26	7	0
Parking	2	1	0	2	1	0
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total Traffic	2647	1416	2	1499	2566	0
Civil						
Tort	100	9	0	12	97	0
Contract	4001	1050	0	1052	3999	0
Real Property	449	232	0	161	520	0
Miscellaneous	115	16	0	23	108	0
Small Claims	125	42	0	25	142	0
Condemnation	0	0	0	0	0	0
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total Civil	4790	1349	0	1273	4866	0
Domestic Relations						
Paternity	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adoption	24	11	0	14	21	0
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total Domestic Relations	24	11	0	14	21	0
Juvenile						
Misdemeanor/Infraction	0	0	0	0	0	0
Felony	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neglected/Dependent	0	0	0	0	0	0
Status Offender	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mentally Ill and Dangerous	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parental	0	0	0	0	0	0
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total Juvenile	0	0	0	0	0	0
Probate						
Estate	699	40	2	41	700	0
Inheritance Tax	19	24	0	20	23	0
Guardianship/Conservatorship	140	26	0	26	140	0
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	0	0
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total Probate	858	90	2	87	863	0
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total Cases Filed	15382	4284	64	4252	15478	4

**STATE OF NEBRASKA
SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT
COUNTY COURTS
(Sarpy, Cass & Otoe Counties)**

JUDGES

**Hon. Todd Hutton
Hon. David J. Partsch
Hon. S. Colin Palm
Vacant**

COURT CLERKS

**Barb Pouson (Sarpy)
Konia Fries (Cass)
Dana Ritchheart (Otoe)**

August 12, 2025

RE: SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT (COUNTY COURTS)

Dear Justice Jonathan J. Papik and Members of the Commission:

On behalf of the county court judges of the Second Judicial District, thank you for the work you perform in the critical task of declaring vacancies when judicial positions need to be filled. We are asking you to declare a judicial vacancy in the county courts of our district caused by the elevation of Judge PaTricia Freeman to the Nebraska Court of Appeals.

The county courts of the Second Judicial District cover matters in Sarpy, Cass, and Otoe Counties. We have been operating with a total of four (4) judges – three (3) in Sarpy County (Hutton, Freeman, and Palm) and one (1) traveling between Cass and Otoe Counties (Partsch). Judge Freeman’s promotion leaves Sarpy County currently operating with two (2) county court judges, and we have been fortunate to have retired judges covering her courtroom daily since she left. They are staying busy, and Judges Hutton and Palm have taken on extra duties to ensure continuity of court operations.

The FY 2025 Weighted Caseload Report was published to the Supreme Court website on August 6, 2025.¹¹ Looking at the numbers, the Second Judicial District’s caseload reflects a judicial need of 4.11 judges. With four (4) judges each has an average workload of 1.03 per judge. As comparison, no other county

¹¹ <https://supremecourt.nebraska.gov/sites/default/files/publication-report-files/FY2025-County-Court-Weighted-Caseload-Report.pdf> (accessed 8/6/2025)

court judicial district in the state has an average workload of higher than 0.96 per judge. The workload of four county court judges in our district is also fairly evenly distributed, as Sarpy County's judicial need is 3.01 and Cass/Otoe's combined judicial need is 1.10. Shuffling caseloads would not alleviate the need for a fourth county court judge in our district.

Another comparison for these FY 2025 numbers is looking back at prior years to see the trends. The FY 2024 Weighted Caseload Report for the Second Judicial District reflected a judicial need of 3.75 judges (2.7 in Sarpy; 1.05 in Cass/Otoe), with an average workload per judge of 0.94. This was up from the FY 2023 numbers which reflected a judicial need of 3.30 judges (2.42 in Sarpy; 0.88 in Cass/Otoe), with an average workload per judge of 0.83. In other words, in just 3 years the average workload per judge in the Second Judicial District has increased by 32.5% (1.10/0.83). Should this trend continue, a fifth judge may be needed in the district within the foreseeable future.

In further support of the current need to fill Judge Freeman's position, each of the second district's three counties continue to grow in population, with Sarpy County growing by far the fastest. In 2023-24 Sarpy County grew at a rate of 2.2%, Otoe at 0.9%, and Cass at 0.1%.² According to numbers compiled by Sarpy County Court Clerk Magistrate Barb Pouson, as of the end of July, the 2025 calendar year new case filings in Sarpy County are 9.4% higher than the filings received by this same time last year. We expect the caseload in the district will only continue to rise.

We also know you are keenly aware of additional factors to the caseload numbers that affect the actual hours judges work on their cases, including: (1) the significant increase in self-represented litigants (and related use of artificial intelligence); (2) the increase in need for language interpretation; (3) the increase in problem solving courts; (4) technology benefits and challenges; and (5) challenges with court staffing and training.

Based upon the current caseload of the county courts of the Second Judicial District, and in consideration of the continued increases in population and new

² U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, Vintage 2024, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties in Nebraska. The State's overall population grew by 0.9%; however, 43 counties lost population.

case filings, we respectfully request that members of the Judicial Resources Commission declare a judicial vacancy in the Second Judicial District county courts with a primary office in Papillion, Nebraska. If you have any questions, comments, concerns or need any additional information, we will have at least one of our judges present at the hearing.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David M. Peters", written in a cursive style.

Presiding Judge of the Second Judicial District