

# CIRCUIT COURT SERVICES

## DESCRIPTION

The Circuit Court of Henrico County (Fourteenth Judicial Circuit) is the trial court of general jurisdiction with the authority to try a full range of civil, chancery/equity, and criminal cases.

In civil cases, the Circuit Court exercises concurrent jurisdiction with the General District Court in money claims of one to twenty-five thousand dollars, and original jurisdiction for claims over twenty-five thousand dollars. Also included on the civil docket are condemnation trials.

In criminal cases, the Circuit Court has jurisdiction over the trials of misdemeanor and felony cases – offenses punishable by confinement in jails or other correctional institutions. Court costs and fines are assessed in court against those charged.

The Circuit Court also exercises jurisdiction in domestic and other chancery/equity cases. This includes all divorce matters, as well as disputes concerning wills and estates, guardianships, and partition suits.

The Circuit Court exercises appellate jurisdiction over appeals of civil and criminal matters from the Henrico Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court and the Henrico General District Court. Circuit Court judges also hear appeals from certain administrative agencies in the Commonwealth and Henrico County.

## OBJECTIVES

- To administer justice fairly, according to applicable laws, in a timely manner.
- To operate an efficient and effective court system in the administration of justice for the citizens of Henrico County.

## FISCAL YEAR 2024 SUMMARY

### Annual Fiscal Plan

<u>Description</u>	<u>FY22 Actual</u>	<u>FY23 Original</u>	<u>FY24 Approved</u>	<u>Change 23 to 24</u>
Personnel	\$ 861,568	\$ 800,567	\$ 832,361	4.0%
Operation	65,024	64,344	64,344	0.0%
Capital	550	1,400	1,400	0.0%
Total	<u>\$ 927,142</u>	<u>\$ 866,311</u>	<u>\$ 898,105</u>	<u>3.7%</u>
Personnel Complement	11	11	11	0

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	Performance Measures			Change 23 to 24
	FY22	FY23	FY24	
<b>Workload Measures</b>				
Full Time Judges	5	5	5	0
Jury Commissioners	6	6	6	0
Citizens Eligible to Serve as Petit Jurors	7,600	7,600	7,850	250
Citizens Called to Serve as Petit Jurors	5,035	7,300	7,400	100
Jury Panels	800	800	900	100
Grand Jurors Called to Serve	108	108	91	(17)
Grand Jurors on Master Panel	88	120	101	(19)

## BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

There are five judges elected to the Circuit Court by the General Assembly of Virginia, each for a term of eight years. One Judge is elected Chief Judge every two years. The Chief Judge serves as the administrative judge of the support staff, which consists of one part-time and four full-time clerical positions, one part-time management specialist, and five law clerks. The Judges' salaries are paid directly by the Commonwealth. Fines and costs against those found guilty in certain felony and misdemeanor cases from Henrico charges are assessed by the judges. These fines and costs are collected by the Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

The Circuit Court's budget for FY24 is \$898,105. This represents an increase of \$31,794 or 3.7% from the FY23 budget. This increase was the effect of rising employee salary, healthcare, and benefit costs. The total operating and capital budgets remain flat from the previous fiscal year.

## DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

Service levels of this court can be measured by the number of cases adjudicated in the Circuit Court each year. This includes criminal, civil, domestic, and appeals from the General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts, along with those carried over from the past year, and requests for juries. According to 2022 Caseload Statistical Information, the caseload for the Fourteenth Circuit showed 12,531 cases (civil, criminal and miscellaneous) commenced in 2022, with an average of 2,506 per judge. There were 5,058 total criminal cases commenced, with an average of 1,011 per judge. There were 4,599 civil cases (which includes the misc. and other category) commenced, with an average of 919 per judge. The total number of cases (civil and criminal) concluded was 11,445 in 2022, with an average of 2,289 per judge. It is anticipated that as things continue to get back to "normal" these numbers will continue to increase. In addition, with the change in the law that the jury no longer sentences defendants, it is still anticipated that there will be an increase in jury trial requests.

In addition, the Circuit Court responds to telephone inquiries from citizens and other courts, coordinates with the Sheriff on courthouse security, provides internships (unpaid) to law students, and contributes to educational programs to improve the administration of justice. Individual judges also actively participate in organizations,

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committees, and programs outside of their everyday duties in the courtroom, including but not limited to the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission, the Benchbook Committee, the Drug Court Program, Virginia Continuing Legal Education and Bench Bar Conference. The judges make themselves available for Three Judge Panels at the request of the Chief Justice and any other committee or panel the Chief Justice may request of them. In addition to these activities, judges also participate in mock trials conducted by the University of Richmond School of Law, local high school students, and for police officer training.