

Court Structure and Caseload Activity

The Unified Court System is comprised of 11 separate trial courts, an Appellate Division with four regional departments, an Appellate Term that hears appeals from certain trial courts in certain regions of the state, and the Court of Appeals — the highest court in the State.

Appellate Courts

The Court of Appeals is the state’s court of last resort. It consists of the Chief Judge and six Associate Judges appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to 14-year terms. The court’s caseload activity is reported in TABLE 1.

Table 1: Caseload Activity in Court of Appeals - 2021						
Applications Decided [CPL 460.20(3)(b)]						1,658
Records on Appeal Filed						91
Oral Arguments						58
Appeals Decided						81
Motions Decided						988
Judicial Conduct Determinations Reviewed						0
Dispositions of Appeals Decided in the Court of Appeals by Basis of Jurisdiction						
BASIS OF JURISDICTION	AFFIRMED	REVERSED	MODIFIED	DISMISSED	OTHER*	TOTAL
All Cases						
Dissents in Appellate Division	4	2	0	1	0	7
Permission of Court of Appeals or Judge thereof	25	20	1	0	0	46
Permission of Appellate Division or Justice thereof	7	10	2	0	0	19
Constitutional Question	1	2	0	0	0	3
Stipulation for Judgment Absolute	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	1	0	0	5	6
Total	37	35	3	1	5	81
Civil Cases						
Dissents in Appellate Division	4	2	0	1	0	7
Permission of Court of Appeals	7	9	0	0	0	16
Permission of Appellate Division	0	4	1	0	0	5
Constitutional Question	1	2	0	0	0	3
Stipulation for Judgment Absolute	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	1	0	0	5	6
Total	12	18	1	1	5	37
Criminal Cases						
Permission of Court of Appeals Judge	18	11	1	0	0	30
Permission of Appellate Division Justice	7	6	1	0	0	14
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	25	17	2	0	0	44

*Includes anomalies which did not result in an affirmance, reversal, modification or dismissal (e.g., judicial suspensions, acceptance of a case for review pursuant to Court Rule 500.27)

Court Structure and Caseload Activity

Below the Court of Appeals is the Appellate Division of State Supreme Court, a mid-level appellate court. The Presiding Justice and Associate Justices of the Appellate Division in each Judicial Department are designated by the Governor from among Justices elected to the Supreme Court. The Presiding Justices serve for the duration of the term for which they were elected to Supreme Court; the Associate Justices may serve terms of five years or of indeterminate length, depending on the seats they are appointed to fill. The Appellate Division's caseload activity is listed in TABLE 2.

Table 2: Caseload Activity in the Appellate Division - 2021

	FIRST DEPT		SECOND DEPT		THIRD DEPT		FOURTH DEPT		TOTAL
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	
Records on Appeal Filed	1,630	650	2,655	529	856	306	596	489	7,711
Disposed of before argument or submission (e.g., dismissed, withdrawn, settled)	1,924	135	2,981	322	746	112	0	0	6,220
Disposed of after argument or submission:									
Affirmed	1,018	390	1,192	511	516	236	347	412	4,622
Reversed	296	31	460	62	88	15	104	50	1,106
Modified	263	74	249	75	104	19	122	51	957
Dismissed	189	5	392	6	75	3	130	15	815
Other	14	10	93	67	7	2	4	16	213
Total Dispositions	3,704	645	5,367	1,043	1,536	387	707	544	13,933
	FIRST DEPT		SECOND DEPT		THIRD DEPT		FOURTH DEPT		TOTAL
Oral Arguments*	1,365		1,655		531		727		4,278
Motions Decided*	3,621		5,640		5,589		5,618		20,468
Admissions to the Bar	1,820		2,126		3,571		312		7,829
Atty. Disciplinary Proceedings Decided	36		132		191		35		394

*Not broken down by civil or criminal.

Appellate Terms of the Supreme Court in the First and Second Judicial Departments hear appeals from civil and criminal cases originating in New York City's Civil and Criminal Courts. In the Second Department, the Appellate Terms also hear appeals from civil and criminal cases originating in District, City, and town and village Justice Courts. Justices are selected by the Chief Administrative Judge upon approval of the Presiding Justice of the appropriate Appellate Division. The Appellate Terms' caseload activity is listed in TABLE 3.

Table 3: Caseload Activity in the Appellate Terms - 2021

	FIRST DEPT			SECOND DEPT			TOTAL
	Civil	Criminal	Total	Civil	Criminal	Total	
Records on Appeal Filed	66	65	131	489	289	778	909
Disposed of before argument or submission (e.g., dismissed, withdrawn, settled)	-	11	11	343	111	454	465
Disposed of after argument or submission:							
Affirmed	57	92	149	157	123	280	429
Reversed	24	13	37	110	42	152	189
Modified	8	3	11	43	8	51	62
Dismissed	9	4	13	30	7	37	50
Other	1	-	1	33	3	36	37
Total Dispositions	99	123	222	716	294	1,010	1,232
Oral Arguments*	122			211			333
Motions Decided*	433			1,380			1,813

*Not broken down by civil or criminal.

Trial Courts

In 2021, 2,160,646 cases were filed statewide in the trial courts. Criminal cases accounted for 30.5%. Civil cases accounted for 46%. Seventeen percent of the cases were in Family Court and 6.5% were in Surrogate’s Court. TABLE 4 shows total filings in the trial courts over a five-year period. FIGURE A shows the percentage of filings by case type.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Criminal					
Supreme and County Courts Criminal ^a	44,283	43,040	39,324	19,059	29,670
Criminal Court of the City of NY ^b	438,525	318,340	325,570	172,451	204,112
City & District Courts Outside NYC ^b	631,255	592,231	606,245	395,448	412,485
Parking Tickets ^c	104,984	93,286	14,331	5,445	17,542
Criminal Total	1,219,047	1,046,897	985,470	592,403	663,809
Civil					
Supreme Court Civil ^d	466,949	460,671	453,140	306,270	345,805
Civil Court of the City of NY ^e	532,043	555,549	540,980	327,371	327,309
City & District Courts Outside NYC ^e	188,550	196,824	191,228	118,024	125,378
County Courts Civil ^d	108,451	93,002	83,278	86,523	96,727
Court of Claims	1,816	1,765	1,801	1,590	1,577
Small Claims Assessment Review Program	44,211	40,466	42,029	102,571	91,426
Civil Total	1,342,020	1,348,277	1,312,456	942,349	988,222
<i>Family</i> ^f	611,470	580,548	578,346	325,694	369,186
<i>Surrogate’s</i>	141,735	144,325	141,237	118,284	139,429
Total	3,314,272	3,120,047	3,017,509	1,978,730	2,160,646

**This reflects data entry as of 2/28/22.*
^aIncludes felonies and misdemeanors, of which 1,845 were misdemeanor filings in 2021.
^bNYC includes arrest and summons cases, and beginning in 2019, includes uniform traffic tickets that require the court’s involvement. Outside NYC includes arrest cases and uniform traffic tickets that require the court’s involvement.
^cBeginning in 2019, parking ticket counts only include those tickets that require the court’s involvement. The counts for 2019, and going forward, include both NYC and outside NYC.
^dIncludes new cases, ex parte applications and uncontested matrimonial cases.
^eIncludes civil, housing, small claims and commercial claims.
^fIncludes Permanency Planning Hearings held.

