



MASSACHUSETTS
TRIAL COURT

JUSTICE WITH DIGNITY AND SPEED

Executive Office of the Trial Court Case Flow Metrics Report

Fiscal Year 2024

Honorable Heidi E. Brieger
Chief Justice of the Trial Court

Thomas G. Ambrosino
Court Administrator







Message from the Trial Court Chief Justice and Court Administrator

Fiscal Year 2024 marked the second full year of regular Trial Court operations since the pandemic, and we are pleased to report progress in reducing the backlog of pending of cases and achieving a high clearance rate. These results reflect the tremendous efforts across all Trial Court departments and members of the bar in helping us return to pre-pandemic levels of court operations.

Case filings and dispositions both increased, reflecting improved efficiency in handling cases. The high clearance rate indicates that cases are being resolved at nearly the same rate as new ones are filed. Additionally, the Trial Court recorded substantial progress in resolving cases within time standards, with a decrease in the number of cases pending beyond those standards.

Our focus in the coming year will continue to ensure that cases are resolved and disposed of within the appropriate time standards. Currently, 75.9% of cases subject to time standards are being disposed of on time – a 6.3 percentage point improvement over last fiscal year. As we maintain this momentum, our goal is to enhance the timeliness of case management across all departments.

For more information about Trial Court data, please visit the Court Data, Metrics & Reports web page at the following link: <https://www.mass.gov/court-data-metrics-reports>.

Heidi E. Brieger
Chief Justice of the Trial Court

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Court Administrator





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Executive Summary

Timely case processing is a key element of the Trial Court's mission to ensure justice is served with dignity and speed. Case flow metrics capture an essential aspect of this, providing court leaders with the data to improve court operations and services and enhance transparency and accountability across the court system.

This report presents a year-over-year comparison of the Trial Court's key case flow metrics.

- Fiscal Year 2024 marked the second full year since the pandemic without restrictions on Trial Court operations and staffing.
- Case flow metrics for FY 2024 reflect a major effort by all courts to prioritize backlogged cases and decrease the size of the pending caseload, which peaked in FY 2021 as a result of the pandemic.
- Metric case filings increased 10.0% over the prior fiscal year to 736,202 cases, as the number of cases resolved or disposed of increased to 721,058, a 3.6% increase in the same period.
- The clearance rate – a measure of outgoing cases to incoming cases – reached 97.9%, reflecting that courts are resolving cases at pace with the number of cases received.
- Overall, 400,531 cases, or 75.9% of those subject to time standards, were disposed on a timely basis (within the time standards), a 6.3% improvement from the prior year. This increase highlights progress in returning to pre-pandemic disposition practices.
- The number of cases pending beyond time standards decreased by 11.7% from last fiscal year. Of the 301,827 pending cases, 130,812 were pending beyond time standards.
- More than 1.9 million events were scheduled in FY2024, of which 70.8% were being held. This marks an increase from the previous fiscal year, indicating that the Trial Court is holding more events. Further insight into best practices for scheduling is needed, as events may not be held for various reasons, including requests by litigants or agreements to resolution.





About Case Flow Metrics

Court leaders, staff, and judicial officers adopted metrics case flow in 2006 to manage court operations. Adapted from the National Center for State Courts' performance measures, the case flow metrics highlighted in this report are a set of performance measures used to manage the timely disposition of cases. Timely disposition is determined by time standards which provide benchmarks for assessing performance. Time standards are promulgated through the standing orders of each court. The Trial Court's key case flow metrics are:

Metric Case Filings

All case filings that are subject to metric analysis.

Clearance Rate

A measure of outgoing cases to the number of incoming cases. Its purpose is to determine if the court is disposing cases at the same rate as the number of cases filed.

Time to Disposition

The rate of cases disposed or resolved within established time standards. Its purpose is to assess the length of time it takes a court to process cases.

Age of Pending Cases

A measure of active, pending cases that are beyond the disposition date set by the time standards. Its purpose is to assess whether there are delays in case processing.

Event Date Certainty

A measure of court events with recorded outcomes compared to total court events scheduled. An event may not be held by request of a litigant or attorney or by agreement to an informal resolution. Its purpose is to assess the court's capacity to hold case events.



Case Management Operations Returning to Normal

The Trial Court implemented a variety of strategies to manage and dispose of its backlogged cases in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This fiscal year, the number of cases pending beyond time standards decreased by 11.7% to 130,812 cases. This reduction signifies a return to pre-pandemic caseload levels. Building on this progress, the Trial Court is now focused on ensuring cases are scheduled for trial and disposed within the appropriate time standards. Efforts involving timely resolution of cases include piloting new case management practices such as judicial settlement conferences in civil cases, special assignment orders for criminal firearm cases, and technology updates to the Trial Court infrastructure.

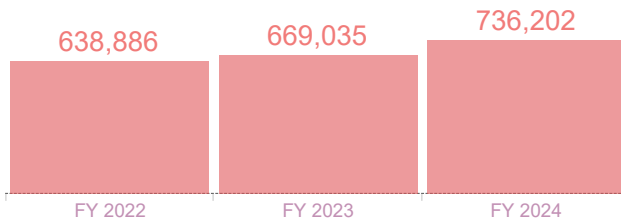




TRIAL COURT CASE FLOW METRICS, 3-YEAR COMPARISON

Annual Percent Change in New Case Filings
Subject to Metrics

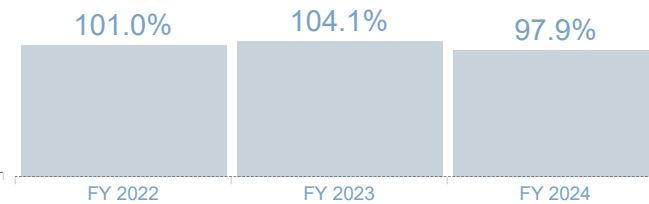
10.0%



How many cases have been filed?

Annual Rate Change in Clearance Rate

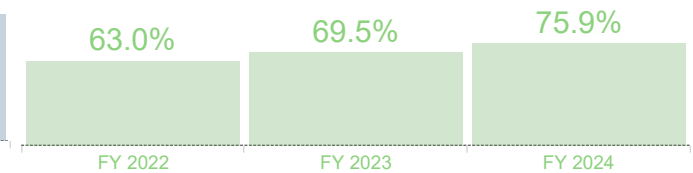
-6.1% points



What percent of cases have been disposed?

Annual Rate Change in Disposed W/ Time Standards

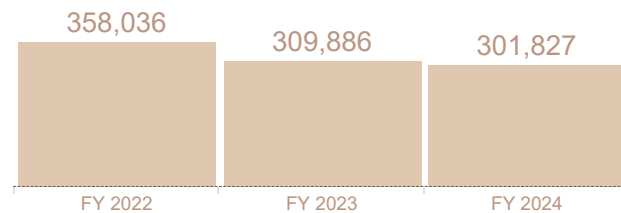
6.3% points



What percent of disposed cases are current?

Annual Percent Change in Pending Cases

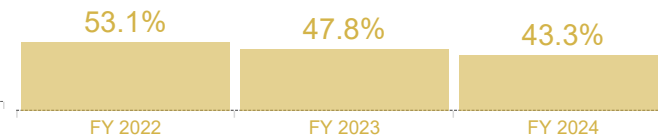
-2.6%



How many cases remain?

Annual Rate Change in Pending Beyond Time Standards

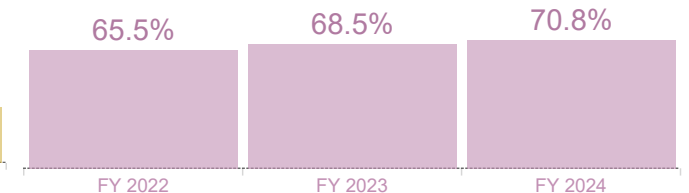
-4.4% points



What percent of cases are aged?

Annual Rate Change in Event Date Certainty

2.3% points



What percent of events were held?

Data Notes:

*Event Date Certainty measures the number of events with recorded outcomes to the number of events held before the court. There are reasons an event may be a recorded outcome but not held, including by request of a litigant or attorney, by agreement to an informal resolution, or for emergency or weather-related matters.

**Annual percent change measures the year-over-year change in case volume, whereas annual rate change measures the year-over-year difference in rate percentage points.



Clearance Rate: New Metric Case Filings and Disposed Cases (Year-Over-Year)

New Metric Case Filings			Disposed Metrics Cases		Clearance Rate		
By Department	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Change
Boston Municipal Court	54,070	64,042	55,489	59,696	102.6%	93.2%	-9.4%
District Court	435,354	491,042	461,600	472,479	106.0%	96.2%	-9.8%
Housing Court	39,566	39,313	36,719	44,377	92.8%	112.9%	20.1%
Juvenile Court	27,223	27,532	27,996	28,760	102.8%	104.5%	1.6%
Land Court	9,630	8,865	8,851	9,090	91.9%	102.5%	10.6%
Probate and Family Court	81,367	83,676	84,362	86,453	103.7%	103.3%	-0.4%
Superior Court	21,825	21,732	21,299	20,203	97.6%	93.0%	-4.6%
Total	669,035	736,202	696,316	721,058	104.1%	97.9%	-6.1%

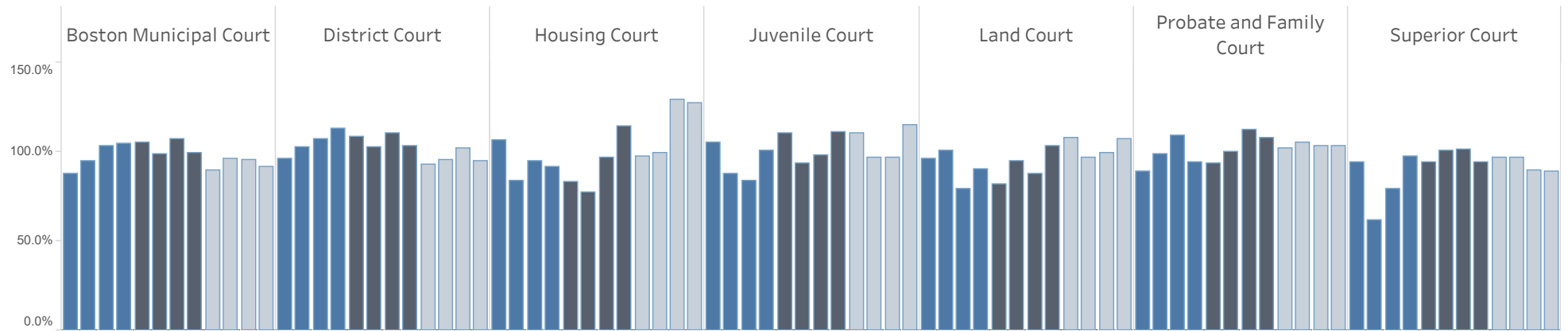
New Metric Case Filings			Disposed Metrics Cases		Clearance Rate		
By General Case Type	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Change
Civil Matters	279,117	314,847	306,850	311,758	109.9%	99.0%	-10.9%
Criminal Matters	290,594	314,662	286,844	302,905	98.7%	96.3%	-2.4%
Domestic Relations	35,336	36,431	36,829	38,402	104.2%	105.4%	1.2%
Juvenile Matters	24,477	24,671	24,972	25,571	102.0%	103.6%	1.6%
Traffic / Ordinance	39,511	45,591	40,821	42,422	103.3%	93.0%	-10.3%
Total	669,035	736,202	696,316	721,058	104.1%	97.9%	-6.1%



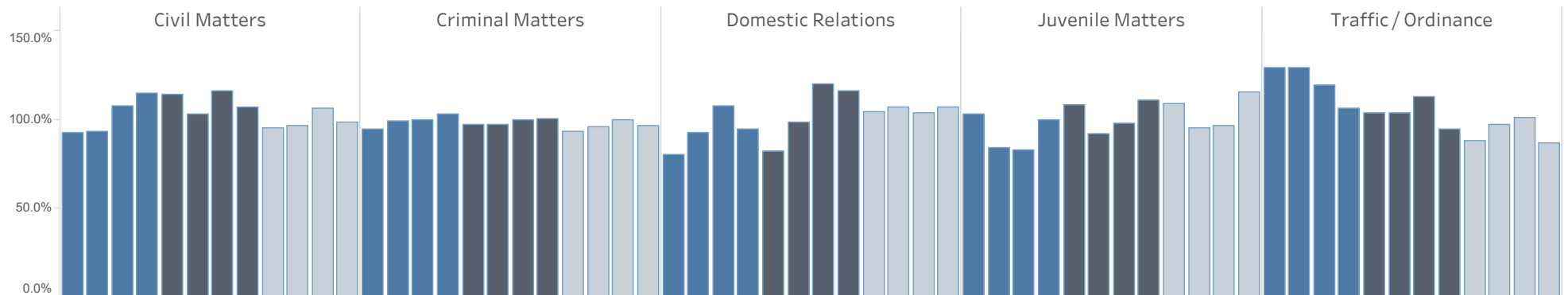
Clearance Rate

Color Legend: Fiscal Year
■ FY 2022 ■ FY 2023 ■ FY 2024

Clearance Rate by Court Department
Most Recent 12 Quarters



Clearance Rate by General Case Type
Most Recent 12 Quarters





Time to Disposition: Disposed Cases, Disposed Within Time Standards (Year-Over-Year)

Disposed Cases subject to Time Standards			Disposed Within Time Standards		Timely Disposed Rate		
By Department	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Change
Boston Municipal Court	38,061	39,086	25,254	29,686	66.4%	76.0%	9.6%
District Court	342,306	340,637	238,861	267,663	69.8%	78.6%	8.8%
Housing Court	36,719	44,375	29,891	33,098	81.4%	74.6%	-6.8%
Juvenile Court	16,709	17,463	9,568	10,080	57.3%	57.7%	0.5%
Land Court	1,538	1,811	951	1,015	61.8%	56.0%	-5.8%
Probate and Family Court	67,346	67,880	47,682	49,348	70.8%	72.7%	1.9%
Superior Court	17,747	16,540	9,688	9,641	54.6%	58.3%	3.7%
Total	520,426	527,792	361,895	400,531	69.5%	75.9%	6.3%

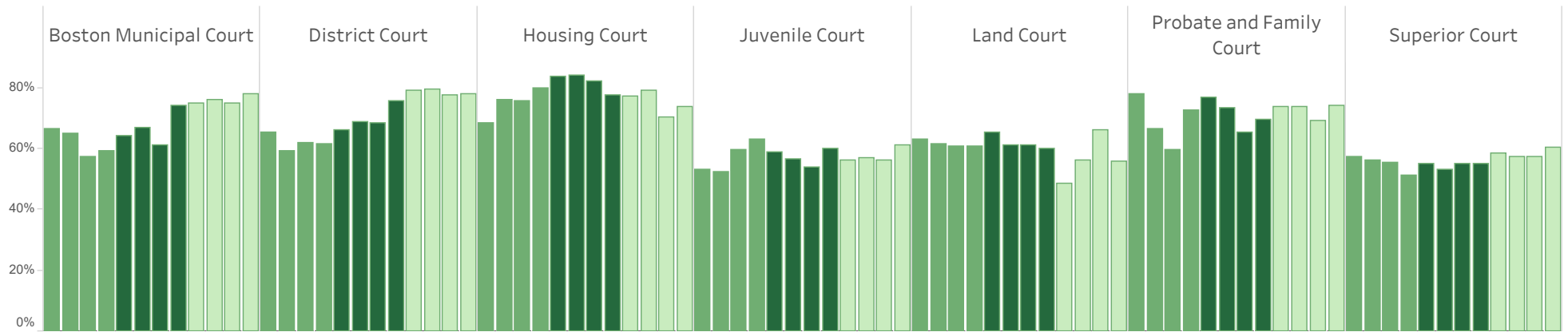
Disposed Cases subject to Time Standards			Disposed Within Time Standards		Timely Disposed Rate		
By General Case Type	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Change
Civil Matters	291,410	294,533	190,419	216,502	65.3%	73.5%	8.2%
Criminal Matters	147,293	147,331	117,029	123,487	79.5%	83.8%	4.4%
Domestic Relations	27,294	29,346	13,469	16,090	49.3%	54.8%	5.5%
Juvenile Matters	13,606	14,162	7,134	7,450	52.4%	52.6%	0.2%
Traffic / Ordinance	40,823	42,420	33,844	37,002	82.9%	87.2%	4.3%
Total	520,426	527,792	361,895	400,531	69.5%	75.9%	6.3%



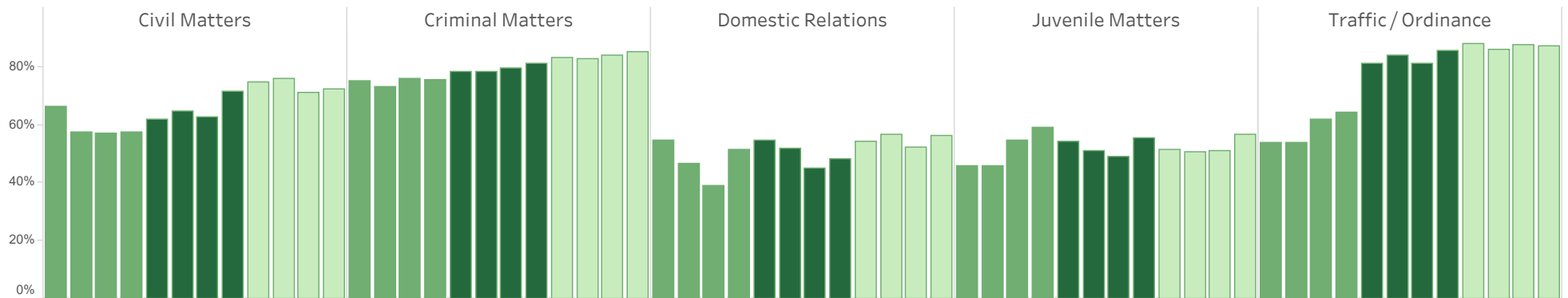
Time to Disposition

Color Legend: Fiscal Year
FY 2022 FY 2023 FY 2024

Percent of Cases Disposed Within Time Standards by Court Department
Most Recent 12 Quarters



Percent of Cases Disposed Within Time Standards by General Case Type
Most Recent 12 Quarters





Age of Cases: Pending Cases, Pending Beyond Time Standards (Year-Over-Year)

Pending Cases subject to Time Standards			Pending Beyond Time Standards		Pending Beyond Rate		
By Department	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Change
Boston Municipal Court	29,456	30,635	18,218	17,257	61.8%	56.3%	-5.5%
District Court	172,786	174,155	86,765	78,981	50.2%	45.4%	-4.9%
Housing Court	13,108	9,191	5,902	3,156	45.0%	34.3%	-10.7%
Juvenile Court	11,135	10,206	3,987	3,784	35.8%	37.1%	1.3%
Land Court	4,583	4,205	2,655	2,701	57.9%	64.2%	6.3%
Probate and Family Court	40,689	35,482	16,847	11,873	41.4%	33.5%	-7.9%
Superior Court	38,129	37,953	13,713	13,060	36.0%	34.4%	-1.6%
Total	309,886	301,827	148,087	130,812	47.8%	43.3%	-4.4%

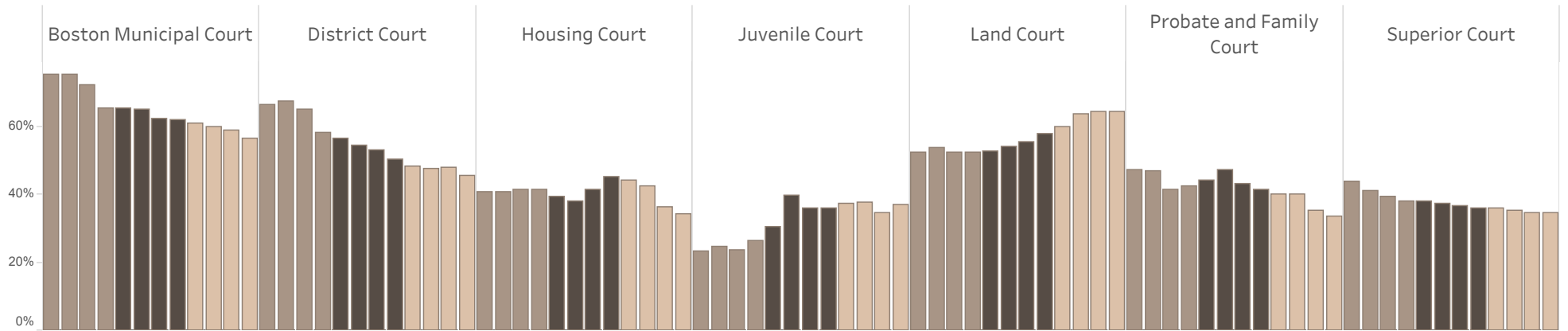
Pending Cases subject to Time Standards			Pending Beyond Time Standards		Pending Beyond Rate		
By General Case Type	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Change
Civil Matters	175,918	174,897	98,200	89,109	55.8%	50.9%	-4.9%
Criminal Matters	66,959	62,260	15,758	11,646	23.5%	18.7%	-4.8%
Domestic Relations	30,311	26,829	12,488	9,223	41.2%	34.4%	-6.8%
Juvenile Matters	9,859	9,017	3,470	3,233	35.2%	35.9%	0.7%
Traffic / Ordinance	26,839	28,824	18,171	17,601	67.7%	61.1%	-6.6%
Total	309,886	301,827	148,087	130,812	47.8%	43.3%	-4.4%



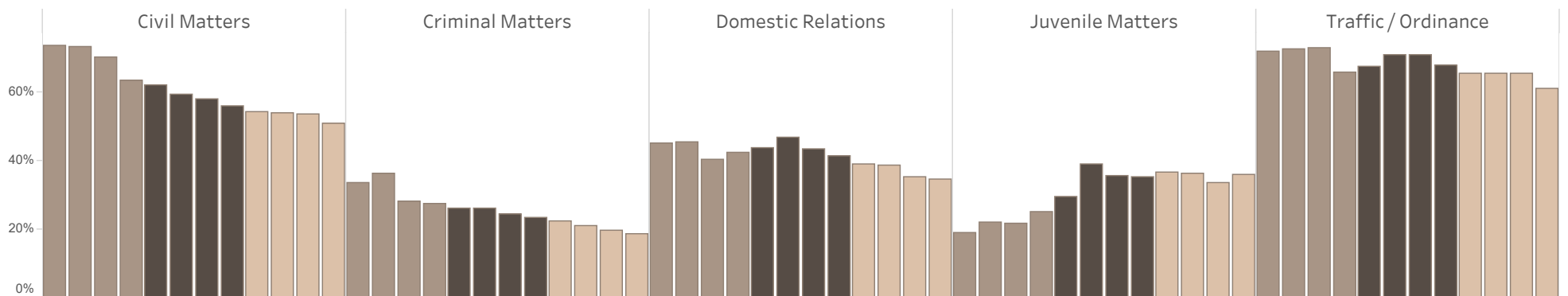
Pending Beyond Caseload

Color Legend: Fiscal Year
■ FY 2022 ■ FY 2023 ■ FY 2024

Percent of Cases Pending Beyond Time Standards by Court Department
Most Recent 12 Quarters



Percent of Cases Pending Beyond Time Standards by General Case Type
Most Recent 12 Quarters





Event Date Certainty: Events with Recorded Outcomes, Events Held (Year-Over-Year)

Events with Recorded Outcomes			Events Held		Event Date Certainty		
By Department	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Change
Boston Municipal Court	174,766	182,391	127,273	137,121	72.8%	75.2%	2.4%
District Court	1,162,744	1,155,813	789,525	815,210	67.9%	70.5%	2.6%
Housing Court	74,331	77,578	45,488	46,151	61.2%	59.5%	-1.7%
Juvenile Court	171,004	165,323	110,626	109,116	64.7%	66.0%	1.3%
Land Court	3,852	3,530	2,588	2,658	67.2%	75.3%	8.1%
Probate and Family Court	174,159	191,286	146,480	163,132	84.1%	85.3%	1.2%
Superior Court	135,636	132,246	77,653	77,688	57.3%	58.7%	1.5%
Total	1,896,492	1,908,167	1,299,633	1,351,076	68.5%	70.8%	2.3%

Events with Recorded Outcomes			Events Held		Event Date Certainty		
By General Case Type	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Change
Civil Matters	419,329	421,951	291,912	298,135	69.6%	70.7%	1.0%
Criminal Matters	1,146,880	1,149,598	762,342	798,084	66.5%	69.4%	3.0%
Domestic Relations	126,920	137,221	103,127	113,448	81.3%	82.7%	1.4%
Juvenile Matters	155,371	150,069	101,753	100,107	65.5%	66.7%	1.2%
Traffic / Ordinance	47,992	49,328	40,499	41,302	84.4%	83.7%	-0.7%
Total	1,896,492	1,908,167	1,299,633	1,351,076	68.5%	70.8%	2.3%

Data Notes:

*Event Date Certainty measures the number of events with recorded outcomes to the number of events held before the court. There are reasons an event may be a recorded outcome but not held, including by request of a litigant or attorney, by agreement to an informal resolution, or for emergency or weather-related matters.

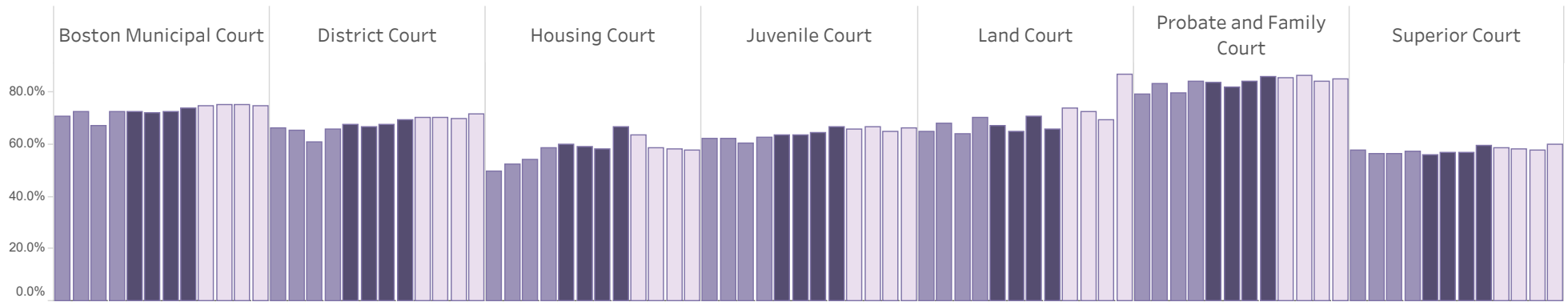


Event Date Certainty

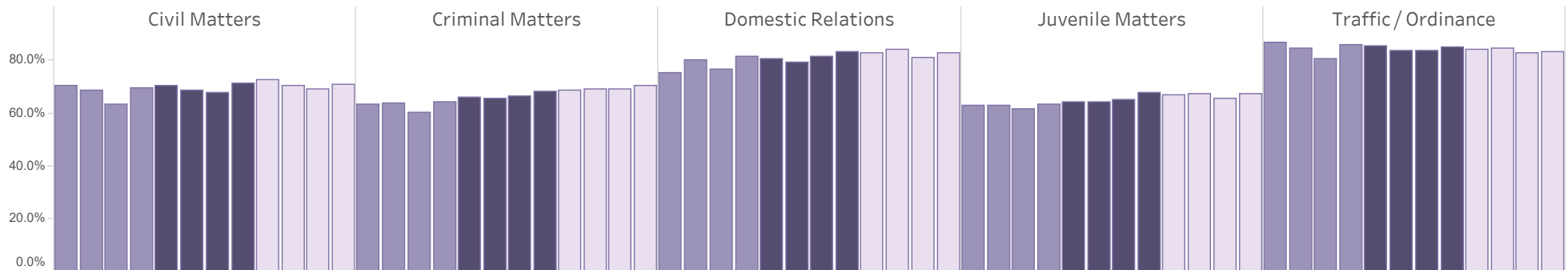
Color Legend: Fiscal Year

FY 2022 FY 2023 FY 2024

Event Date Certainty by Court Department
Most Recent 12 Quarters



Event Date Certainty by General Case Type
Most Recent 12 Quarters



Data Notes:

*Event Date Certainty measures the number of events with recorded outcomes to the number of events held before the court. There are reasons an event may be a recorded outcome but not held, including by request of a litigant or attorney, by agreement to an informal resolution, or for emergency or weather-related matters.



CASE FLOW METRICS, PERFORMANCE RATES, YEAR-OVER-YEAR COMPARISON

By Department	By General Case Type	Clearance Rate		Timely Disposed Rate		Pending Beyond Rate		Event Date Certainty	
		Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year
Boston Municipal Court	Civil Matters	110.4%	92.2%	59.7%	72.9%	74.6%	69.5%	74.9%	74.6%
	Criminal Matters	97.7%	94.2%	70.4%	75.5%	29.2%	22.2%	72.0%	75.0%
	Traffic / Ordinance	110.9%	89.4%	85.8%	97.7%	83.3%	74.4%	87.2%	85.1%
District Court	Civil Matters	117.6%	95.9%	58.2%	70.9%	63.7%	57.2%	71.3%	72.9%
	Criminal Matters	99.4%	96.9%	82.1%	86.7%	18.1%	12.8%	66.3%	69.3%
	Juvenile Matters								
	Traffic / Ordinance	102.6%	93.0%	83.1%	87.0%	65.6%	59.3%	84.4%	83.7%
Housing Court	Civil Matters	92.6%	113.4%	82.5%	75.6%	43.7%	32.9%	62.0%	60.4%
	Criminal Matters	94.7%	100.6%	68.8%	64.3%	53.2%	50.9%	44.9%	40.3%
	Traffic / Ordinance	109.7%	140.3%	26.3%	26.8%	95.9%	88.0%	62.5%	79.9%
Juvenile Court	Civil Matters	119.0%	122.3%	66.2%	68.9%	50.6%	56.3%	57.0%	59.6%
	Criminal Matters	105.9%	94.9%	74.1%	72.2%	32.5%	31.1%	33.7%	34.7%
	Domestic Relations	96.6%	97.0%	98.2%	98.5%	22.0%	32.0%	69.9%	69.7%
	Juvenile Matters	102.2%	103.8%	52.4%	52.6%	35.2%	35.9%	65.5%	66.7%
Land Court	Civil Matters	91.9%	102.5%	61.8%	56.0%	57.9%	64.2%	67.2%	75.3%
Probate and Family Court	Civil Matters	103.1%	101.6%	85.8%	86.7%	41.3%	30.7%	91.1%	91.3%
	Domestic Relations	104.5%	105.7%	47.3%	53.0%	41.4%	34.4%	81.4%	82.8%
Superior Court	Civil Matters	106.9%	98.6%	62.1%	66.7%	31.3%	29.7%	48.6%	49.2%
	Criminal Matters	80.8%	83.0%	19.1%	21.8%	62.6%	63.1%	60.9%	62.9%
	Juvenile Matters	72.5%	74.7%					53.3%	77.5%

Data Notes:

*Event Date Certainty measures the number of events with recorded outcomes to the number of events held before the court. There are reasons an event may be a recorded outcome but not held, including by request of a litigant or attorney, by agreement to an informal resolution, or for emergency or weather-related matters.