

MICHIGAN COURT OF APPEALS



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The Constitution of 1963 provides for a court of appeals, whose jurisdiction is provided by law and the practice and procedure prescribed by rules of the supreme court. The court of appeals currently has 28 judges, who are nominated and elected at nonpartisan elections from 4 districts as provided by Act 190 of 1993.

The legislature may increase the number of judges and alter the districts from which they are elected. When it first began operation in 1965, the bench of the Court of Appeals was comprised of 9 judges. In 1969, the legislature increased the size of the bench to 12 judges, and further increases occurred in 1974 (18 judges), in 1988 (24 judges), and in 1993 (28 judges).

A candidate for the court of appeals must be a lawyer, under 70 years of age, a qualified elector, and a resident of the district in which he or she is running.

Judges are elected for 6-year terms. Their salaries are set by the legislature. Every 2 years a chief judge is selected by the supreme court. In addition to hearing cases, the chief judge performs administrative duties and other assignments required by the supreme court.

The court of appeals hears civil and criminal cases.

Three-judge panels of the court of appeals hear cases in Lansing, Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Marquette. The panels are rotated to encourage statewide uniformity in rulings by eliminating the likelihood of conflicting legal philosophies developing in specific geographical areas. The procedure for hearing cases is similar to that followed by the supreme court. The decision of a panel of the court of appeals is final except in those cases where the decision is reviewed by the supreme court.

Activities and Workload

In 2002, 7,156 cases were filed with the Michigan Court of Appeals. This represents an increase of 0.76% from the 7,102 cases filed in 2001 and a 9% increase over the 6,554 cases filed in 1984. The court of appeals disposed of 7,647 cases during 2002, an increase of 0.53% over the 7,606 cases disposed of in 2001 and a 15.7% increase over the 6,605 cases disposed of in 1984.

The average number of cases filed in the court of appeals per judge has increased over the years. In 2002, there was an average of 256 cases filed per judge while in 1965 there were only 137 filings per judge.

Prior to 1998, court of appeals' statistics reflected one case per each *lower court number* that was referenced in a file. Starting in 1998, these statistics reflect one case per each *court of appeals* docket number regardless of how many lower court docket numbers might be referenced in that file.



The average number of cases filed in the Court of Appeals per judge has fluctuated over the years. In 2002, there was an average 256 cases filed per Court of Appeals judge. Filings per judge have ranged from a low of 163 in 1969 to a high of 556 in 1992. The averages of new filings per judge do not reflect the impact of the temporary assignments of visiting judges to the court.

COURT OF APPEALS FILINGS PER JUDGE, 1998-2002

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Filed	8,264	7,731	7,460	7,102	7,156
Disposed	8,806	7,715	7,799	7,606	7,647
Judges	28	28	28	28	28
Filings per Judge	295	276	266	254	256

TRENDS IN DISPOSITIONS BY OPINION OR ORDER IN THE COURT OF APPEALS, 1985-2002

Year	Number Disposed	Disposed by Opinion	Percent Opinion	Disposed by Order	Percent Order
1985	6,308	3,694	57.8	2,614	40.9
1986	6,573	3,858	58.7	2,715	41.3
1987	7,502	4,179	55.7	3,323	44.3
1988	8,508	4,874	57.3	3,628	42.7
1989	8,983	4,976	55.4	4,007	44.6
1990	10,503	4,729	45.0	5,774	55.0
1991	10,237	4,627	45.0	5,610	55.0
1992	11,662	5,300	45.4	6,362	54.6
1993	13,037	6,240	47.9	6,797	52.1
1994	12,824	6,332	49.4	6,492	50.6
1995	12,596	5,968	47.4	6,628	52.6
1996	10,842	4,774	44.0	6,068	56.0
1997	10,242	4,418	43.0	5,824	57.0
1998	8,806	3,013	34.0	5,793	66.0
1999	7,715	3,063	39.7	4,652	60.3
2000	7,799	3,210	41.2	4,589	58.8
2001	7,606	3,138	41.3	4,468	58.7
2002	7,647	3,645	47.7	4,002	52.3

Source: State Court Administrative Office