

Friend of the Court  
Annual Grievance  
Report to the Legislature  
Calendar Year 2014

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT  
State Court Administrative Office  
Friend of the Court Bureau

July  
2015

## SUMMARY

The State Court Administrative Office's Friend of the Court Bureau was created by the Friend of the Court Act, 1982 PA 294, MCL 552.501, *et seq.*, (the Act). Among other duties, the Act requires the FOCB to collect data on the operations of friend of the court (FOC) offices, including data on all grievances filed with FOCs and the FOCs' responses to those grievances. MCL 552.519(3)(d), requires the FOCB to prepare an annual FOC grievance report that provides a summary of the types of grievances each office receives and whether the grievances are resolved or outstanding. This report is the 31st annual grievance report submitted to the Michigan Legislature.

During the 2014 calendar year, 393 grievances were filed with 53 FOC offices,<sup>1</sup> 16 more than in 2013. The grievances raised a total of 639 discrete and grievable issues.<sup>2</sup> Of those issues, 58 percent (369) were complaints about some aspect of FOC office operations, while 42 percent (270) were issues related to an FOC employee's performance.

In the "office operations" category, 47 percent (173) raised a child support issue, 17 percent (64) focused on parenting time, 6 percent (23) involved custody, and 8 percent (28) alleged gender biases. The remaining 22 percent (81) were classified as "other" because the issues they raised were unique or nearly so, and did not fit into the categories listed above.

In this annual report, grievance responses are grouped into four categories: (1) grievances acknowledged to have merit in full; (2) grievances acknowledged to have merit in part; (3) grievances denied; and (4) grievances deemed nongrievable. In 2014, 23 grievances were acknowledged to have merit in full, 37 were acknowledged to have merit in part, 278 were denied, 64 were nongrievable, and 4 were pending as of December 31, 2014. In response to grievances acknowledged to have merit in full or in part, FOCs changed their office procedures in 14 instances and took personnel actions in 25 instances.<sup>3</sup>

The chart provides detailed grievance data information. Also attached is a separate summary of grievance processing by FOC Citizen Advisory Committees in the two counties that have committees.

### LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

#### Grievance Report Links

[SCAO Grievance Forms](#)

[Statute Describing Grievance Process](#)

Attachments: Data Charts, CAC Supplement

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the 66 FOC offices did not have a grievance filed in 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Grievances sometimes raise issues that the Act does not recognize as "grievable." Examples include complaints about the substance of a court's ruling, complaints about the substance of an FOC's recommendation to a court, and issues that must be addressed by some agency other than the FOC (e.g., complaints about judges and referees who are subject to the Judicial Tenure Commission, complaints about prosecutors who do not charge a person with criminal nonsupport, and complaints about private attorneys who are subject to the Attorney Grievance Commission). The FOCs accept these grievances and respond to them, but the response may simply inform the grievant that the issue is not grievable under the Act.

<sup>3</sup> Not all grievances acknowledged in full or in part required a change in office procedures or personnel action. Some grievances merely required corrective action on the case. Even when a grievance is denied, it can lead to a change in practices.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE DATA CHARTS

Total Filed	Number of grievances filed in each office during the reporting year of January 1 through December 31.
Response Over 30 days	Number of grievances not responded to within the statutorily required time period of 30 days. [MCL 552.526.]
Duplicate Grievance (DG)	Same party filed a grievance on the same issue.
Same Grievance Filed With the Citizen Advisory Committee (CA)	The same grievance filed with the FOC and a citizen advisory committee.
Same Party/ New Grievance (SP)	Same party filed a prior grievance dealing with items not addressed in current grievance.

### GRIEVANCE ISSUE CATEGORIES:

Employee (Empl)	Number of grievances filed that concerned an employee.
Office Operations	This broad category (for which the charts do not show a cumulative number) includes grievances regarding support, parenting time, custody, gender, or “other.” The charts provide numbers for each of those “office operations” components.
Support (S)	Number of grievances in which support-related concerns were at issue.
Parenting Time (PT)	Number of grievances in which parenting-time concerns were at issue.
Custody (C)	Number of grievances in which custody concerns were at issue.
Gender-Based (GB)	Number of grievances in which gender concerns were at issue.
Other (O)	Number of grievances in which other concerns not related to support, parenting time, custody, or gender were at issue.

### POSSIBLE GRIEVANCE RESPONSES:

Acknowledged in Full (AF)	Merit in grievance.
Acknowledged in Part (AP)	Merit in part of grievance.

Denied (D)	No merit in grievance.
Nongrievable (NG)	Issue does not come under the grievance procedure.
Pending Response (PR)	Number of grievances not resolved at the time the grievance report was submitted to the State Court Administrative Office.

**GRIEVANCE RESULTS:**

Change in Policy/  
Operations (CO)      Grievance resulted in change in office operations.

Personal Action (PA)      Grievance resulted in personnel or employee action.

No Action (NA)      No change in policy or personnel action.

Notes      A single grievance may involve both office operations and an employee. Therefore, the total number of grievances filed may be less than the sum of employee-related grievances plus office operations grievances.

A grievance may involve multiple concerns that require an FOC response. One response may address multiple concerns. Therefore, the total number of grievance concerns reported here (e.g., support, parenting time, custody, gender, or “other”) may exceed the total number of grievances filed. Also, one FOC response may address multiple concerns.

County	2014 total filed	Response over 30 days	Multiple Grievances			Types of Grievance Issues						Grievance Response Category					Grievance Result		
			DG	CA	SP	Empl.	S	PT	C	GB	O	A/F	A/P	D	NG	PR	CO	PA	NA
ALCONA/ ARENAC/IOSCO/OSCODA	3	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	2
ALGER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ALLEGAN	5	1	0	0	0	5	5	2	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	1	4
ALPENA/ MONTMORENCY	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
ANTRIM/ GRAND TRAVERSE/LEELANAU	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
BARRY	9	7	0	0	5	4	6	1	2	0	5	1	0	5	1	2	0	0	7
BAY	3	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	3
BENZIE	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
BERRIEN	6	5	0	0	1	3	1	4	0	2	2	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	6
BRANCH	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
CALHOUN	6	1	0	0	0	3	1	2	1	0	0	2	0	3	1	0	0	2	4
CASS	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	2	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	2
CHARLEVOIX	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEBOYGAN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHIPPEWA	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1
CLARE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CLINTON	5	0	1	0	0	4	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	5
DELTA	4	0	0	0	0	4	3	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	2
DICKINSON	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
EATON	8	4	2	0	0	9	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	2	6
EMMET	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENESEE	24	1	2	0	4	9	3	2	0	2	11	3	3	15	3	0	5	1	18
GLADWIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GOGEBIC	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
GRATIOT	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
HILLSDALE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HOUGHTON/BARAGA/ KEWEENAW	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
HURON	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
INGHAM	23	0	0	0	0	16	4	6	0	0	5	1	0	18	2	2	0	3	17
IONIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IRON	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
ISABELLA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
JACKSON	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4

KALAMAZOO	3	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
KENT	19	0	0	0	0	15	11	2	0	0	3	3	2	14	0	0	2	3	14
LAKE	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
LAPEER	5	0	0	0	0	3	1	3	1	0	2	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	4
LENAWEE	9	0	1	0	0	7	3	0	0	0	2	0	1	6	4	0	0	0	9
LIVINGSTON	5	0	0	0	1	5	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	5
LUCE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MACKINAC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MACOMB	29	1	0	0	3	36	11	3	2	1	7	0	0	29	0	0	0	0	29
MANISTEE	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
MARQUETTE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MASON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MECOSTA	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
MENOMINEE	5	0	0	0	0	6	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	5	0	0	1	0	4
MIDLAND	4	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	0	2	2	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	3
MONROE	7	0	1	0	3	6	4	0	0	0	3	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	6
MONTCALM	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
MUSKEGON	9	1	0	0	1	7	3	4	0	0	0	1	1	7	0	0	0	2	7
NEWAYGO	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
OAKLAND	73	0	4	5	5	53	29	9	1	10	6	2	8	50	13	0	2	3	68
OCEANA	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
OGEMAW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ONTONAGON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OSCEOLA	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
OTSEGO/CRAWFORD/ KALKASKA	4	0	0	0	1	2	4	0	1	1	1	0	1	3	2	0	0	1	2
OTTAWA	9	1	0	0	5	10	6	1	3	0	2	1	1	6	1	0	0	2	7
PRESQUE ISLE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ROSCOMMON	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
SAGINAW	10	0	0	0	0	9	4	2	2	0	4	2	0	8	0	0	0	2	8
ST. CLAIR	4	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	2	3	3	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	4
ST. JOSEPH	4	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
SANILAC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SCHOOLCRAFT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SHIAWASSEE	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	2
TUSCOLA	3	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
VANBUREN	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
WASHTENAW	5	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	5
WAYNE	53	1	0	0	0	15	32	0	0	0	6	4	9	28	12	0	0	0	53
WEXFORD/MISSAUKEE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>348</b>

## **2014 Friend of the Court Citizen Advisory Committee Supplement**

### **State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) Friend of the Court Bureau (FOCB) 2014 Citizen Advisory Committee Report to the Legislature**

This report summarizes the current status of the Friend of the Court Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs). A brief history of the CACs can be found in the [SCAO's 2004 Annual Grievance Report to the Legislature](#).

In December 2014, the FOCB contacted all Friend of the Court (FOC) directors and asked if they had an active CAC in their county. Two counties reported operational Citizen Advisory Committees (Kent and Oakland), and those counties were sent the annual CAC reporting forms.

#### **Kent County CAC**

The Kent County CAC met six times. The CAC submitted minutes after each CAC meeting to the county board of commissioners. The CAC formed a subcommittee to review grievances.

No grievances were filed directly with the CAC, but the committee reviewed every grievance filed with the Kent County FOC, and the FOC response to the grievance. The 19 grievances contained 2 custody issues, 5 parenting time issues, 14 support issues, 4 gender-based issues, and 3 issues considered "other." The CAC fully agreed with the FOC 10 times, partially agreed with the FOC 7 times, and disagreed with the FOC 2 times. The CAC did not report a finding of gender bias in any of the grievances. The FOCB examined the issues raised in the grievances and found the FOC's responses to be proper.

#### **Oakland County CAC**

The Oakland County CAC met 7 times in 2014. Minutes were submitted to the county board after each CAC meeting. The CAC held two informal hearings to investigate grievances.

There were no grievances filed directly with the committee, but the CAC reviewed 23 grievances that were filed initially with the FOC office. Those 23 grievances raised 19 gender-based issues, 9 child support issues, 2 custody issues, 12 parenting time issues, and 1 issue considered "other." The CAC fully agreed with the FOC regarding 20 grievance responses, partially disagreed with 1 FOC grievance response, and disagreed with 2 FOC grievance responses. The CAC did not report a finding of gender bias in any of the grievances. The FOCB reviewed the one grievance with which the CAC partially disagreed and the two grievances that the Oakland County CAC fully disagreed with the FOC. The FOCB examined the issues raised in the grievances and found the FOC's responses to be proper.