



ALBERTA COURT OF JUSTICE

BIENNIAL REPORT

APRIL 1, 2021 – MARCH 31, 2023

NOTE TO READERS:

Copies of the annual report are available on the Alberta Court of Justice website: albertacourts.ca

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE



This is the first biennial report that the Court has published since adopting a new name. This spring, the former Provincial Court of Alberta became the Alberta Court of Justice. This is a change that has been a long time coming and reflects the Court's increase in capacity and jurisdiction. This name change more clearly communicates the nature, purpose, and independence of our work on behalf of Albertans.

Alberta continues to attract newcomers from all over Canada and across the globe. This ever-increasing population means increasing workload for the Court. Over the past two years, we have grown from having a complement of 136 full-time Justices to 143 full-time Justices, and from 35 Justices of the Peace to 44.

In April two years ago, the province was only beginning to make progress in the battle against COVID-19. The first vaccines had just become available, significant social distancing measures were necessary, and there was always uncertainty about whether closures would become necessary again. By necessity, the Court

The past two years have been ones of evolution and growth for the Alberta Court of Justice.

Over this period, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to upholding justice, safeguarding the rule of law, and serving the people of Alberta with unwavering dedication. As Chief Justice, I am pleased to reflect upon the significant work accomplished by our Court from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2023.

embraced technological innovations such as virtual courtrooms and remote online filing of documents. Today, courthouses have fully reopened to the public and all COVID restrictions have been removed, but many of the technological innovations remain and continue to have long-term positive benefits for access to justice in the province.

Over the past two years, the Court has also been able to implement changes that had been delayed by the pandemic, including Criminal Rules of Court that were launched in September 2021. These rules are designed to ensure that criminal proceedings before the Court are dealt with in a fair, efficient, orderly, and consistent manner. They provide clarity about scheduling, document filing, courtroom procedures, and many aspects of the criminal court processes that aren't already delineated by federal statute, or legislation.

In November 2022, the Court completed an assessment of the judicial complement, and produced an update to a 2017 report on the subject. This Judicial Complement Report

Update examined the changing needs of a growing province, the trends in terms of court case complexity, and overall caseload. The Judicial Complement Report Update concluded that although it is difficult to develop a purely quantitative formula for judicial complement due to the complexity of the justice system, comparing the increase in key measures since the 2017 report confirms that the full additional complement of judges recommended was still warranted.

Completed in November 2022, the Justice of the Peace Report examined the role of Justices of the Peace within the court structure, made recommendations about additional work Justices of the Peace might take on, and what this might mean to the complement of Justices of the Peace.

The Court has recommitted itself to examining and understanding our relationship with Indigenous communities. In September of 2022, the Court launched its Indigenous Justice Strategy, which attempts to respond to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the Calls for Justice of the Murdered and Missing Women and Girls Inquiry and 113 Pathways to Justice: Recommendations of the Alberta Joint Working Group on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The Indigenous Justice Strategy consists of 20 concrete responses by the Court to identified priorities.

In December of 2022, the *Court of Justice Act* and the Civil Procedure Regulation were amended to allow our civil division to handle larger civil claims. The first increase in the claim limit to \$100,000 will take effect on August 1, 2023. This increase will allow more Albertans to have timely and effective access to justice.

Over the past two years, the Court has also been able to implement changes that had been delayed by the pandemic, including Criminal Rules of Court that were launched in September 2021. These rules are designed to ensure that criminal proceedings before the Court are dealt with in a fair, efficient, orderly, and consistent manner.

It is an honour to work with Justices and Justices of the Peace on this Court who serve the public with such diligence and dedication, and with their respective representatives from The Alberta Provincial Judges Association and The Society of the Justices of the Peace of Alberta. We are all grateful for the efforts of the hardworking and committed judiciary and court staff who so capably support the Court of Justice.

Thank you for reading this biennial report on the work of the Court of Justice. It is important to us that reports like this communicate to the public the important role that courts play in upholding democratic norms and maintaining the rule of law.

WHAT IS THE ALBERTA COURT OF JUSTICE

Overview of the Court

The Court of Justice is a trial-level court in Alberta. It is the first point of contact with the justice system for most people in the province.

It has three divisions:

- 1 CRIMINAL**, which handles first appearances, entry of pleas, bail hearings, preliminary inquiries, trials and sentencing of all prosecutions.
- 2 CIVIL**, which provides a simple, affordable, and accessible means to resolve most types of private disputes.
- 3 FAMILY & YOUTH**, which hears applications for child and spousal support, parenting arrangements, private guardianship and all child protection cases. The family division also handles criminal matters in which the accused is aged 12 to 17.

The Court of Justice hears most of the criminal and civil cases in Alberta. All criminal cases start in the Alberta Court of Justice, and more than 95 per cent conclude here. Many traffic, regulatory and bylaw enforcement hearings take place here. Most civil cases also take place in the Court of Justice, including cases involving landlord and tenant and claims involving less than \$50,000 (a limit that will increase to \$100,000 on August 1, 2023). Most family law and child welfare cases are also heard by the Court of Justice.

In addition, the Court presides over all Fatality Inquiries and hears matters involving provincial statutes and regulations.

Our Justices of the Peace oversee a Provincial Hearing Office that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. They also deal with applications for judicial authorizations, emergency applications under provincial statutes and preside over traffic matters.

Values and Vision

The Court has served Albertans for more than a century and has grown to meet the continuously evolving needs of Alberta's diverse society. During this time, the Court has maintained the confidence of Albertans and has a reputation for providing accessible and timely justice to all.

The Court serves the public by providing access to a fair, efficient and innovative system of justice. We provide an impartial and independent forum that:

- is accessible to all Albertans regardless of their location or means;
- maintains respect for the rule of law and confidence in the administration of justice; and
- reflects cultural diversity and the core values of fairness, accountability, integrity and excellence.

Governance of the Court

The Chief Justice is responsible for the administration and governance of the Court. Appointed to a seven-year term under Section 9 of the *Court of Justice Act*, the Chief Justice supervises Justices in the performance of their duties, including:

- designating a particular case or other matter or class of cases or matters in respect of which a particular Justice is to act;
- designating which court facilities shall be used by particular Justices;

- assigning duties to Justices; and exercising any other powers and performing any other duties prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

The Chief Justice works with a governance structure that consists of the Chief and Council, six standing Committees, and ad hoc committees as required.

The Chief and Council is made up of the Chief Justice, the Deputy Chief Justice, and nine Assistant Chief Justices. The standing Committees, which are made up of Justices, Justices of the Peace and judicial staff, are:

- Education
- Criminal Case Flow Management
- Civil Case Flow Management
- Family, Youth and Child Protection Case Flow Management
- Indigenous Justice
- Technology

Regional Courts

The Court sits in 73 locations throughout Alberta.

The Court is divided into regions and divisions:

- Northern Region
- Edmonton Region
- Edmonton Criminal Division
- Edmonton Family & Youth Division
- Central Region
- Calgary Criminal & Region
- Calgary Family & Youth Division
- Civil Division – Calgary & Edmonton
- Southern Region

Justices assigned to sit in the Regions travel to various circuit points. Regional Justices regularly hear matters in all areas of the Court’s jurisdiction (civil, family, youth criminal, and adult criminal).



REGIONAL COURTS:
The Court sits in 73 locations throughout Alberta.

Justices of the Court of Justice

The Court's total judicial complement is 143 full-time Justices.

These Justices are appointed by the Government of Alberta pursuant to the *Court of Justice Act*. An applicant for appointment to the Court must be approved by both the Alberta Judicial Council and the Provincial Court Nominating Committee. The names of approved candidates are put to the Minister of Justice, who then makes a recommendation to Cabinet. If Cabinet agrees, an Order in Council is issued by the Lieutenant Governor appointing the new Justice.

The Court is a court of statutory jurisdiction, which means that its Justices may exercise authority in areas that have been defined in a statute. While all Justices may hear cases in all areas of the law where the Court has jurisdiction, the Court does function by division, by both subject matter and geography.

Justices of the Peace

Justices of the Peace are authorized to conduct a variety of court proceedings including processing search warrants, arrest warrants, and Informations, conducting bail hearings, emergency child and family protection applications, and hearings for the protection of victims of human trafficking or missing persons cases. They also have jurisdiction to conduct traffic court matters, provincial offences hearings, and municipal bylaw matters.

As of March 31, 2023, the Court had a complement of 44 full-time, part-time and ad hoc Justices of the Peace. Justices of the Peace are now selected through a process that mirrors the appointment process for Justices of the Court. Applications are accepted continuously, are then screened and interviewed by Judicial Council before being interviewed by the Provincial Court Nominating Committee. If a candidate is approved by both bodies, they are placed on an eligibility

list from which the Minister of Justice selects appointees.

Justices of the Peace are appointed for ten-year terms and are eligible to sit as ad hoc Justices of the Peace on a yearly basis for a further five years thereafter.

Judicial Education

The Alberta Court of Justice places a high priority on continuing legal education. This commitment is reflected in the Court's Education Plan, which describes the Court's approach and commitment to judicial education in four areas: substantive law, judicial skills, social context and judicial development.

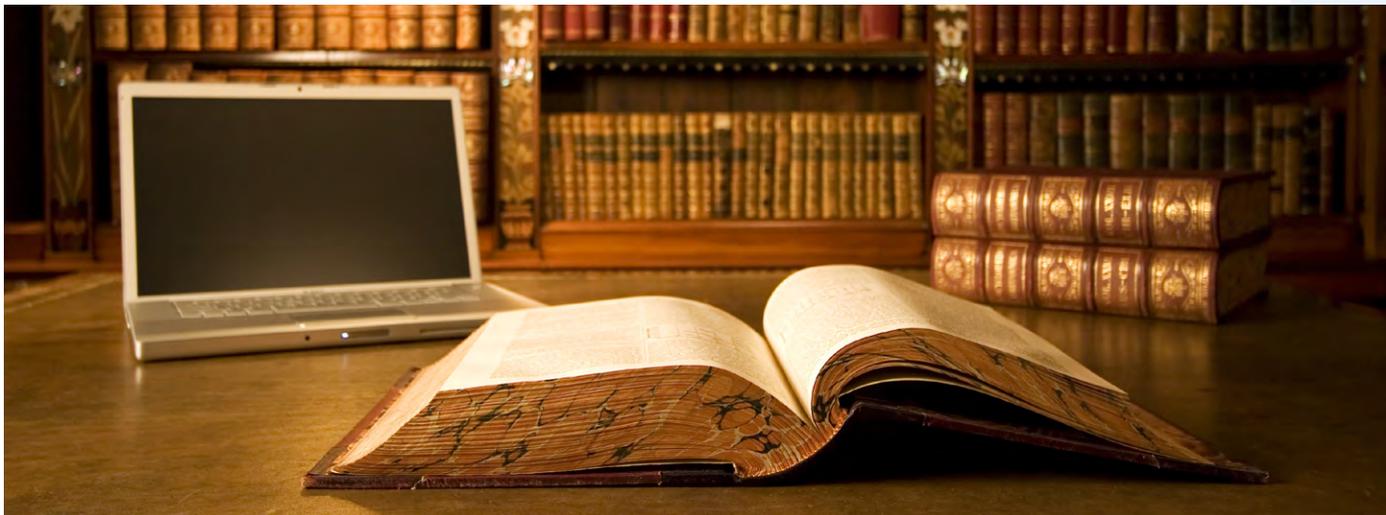
The Court has the benefit of three Education Committees that work together to coordinate the education programs for the Court: The Court Education Committee, The Alberta Provincial Judges Association (APJA) Education Committee and the Society of the Justices of the Peace in Alberta (SJPA) Education Committee.

EDUCATION PLANS

The Court's Education Committee reviews the three-year Education Plan annually to keep it current. The Committee reviews developments in law and society, considers the goals and needs of the Court, and establishes education priorities. The Court Education Committee is also responsible for the New Justices Education Plan and the New Justices of the Peace Education Plan, which guide Justices and Justices of the Peace in the first five years after appointment and are updated on a regular basis. As part of their individual education plans, new Justices are expected to attend sessions on Indigenous learning and sexual assault law.

APJA/SJPA EDUCATION CONFERENCES

The APJA and the SJPA receive a grant from the Government to organize biannual education conferences. All Justices and Justices of the Peace are expected to attend educational conferences



unless assigned to urgent court duties or on pre-scheduled vacation. The conferences cover an array of topics and include breakout sessions covering various areas of law and topics of importance.

IN-HOUSE PROGRAMS

The Boot Camp program for newly appointed Justices and Justices of the Peace runs for half a day once or twice a year in association with the conferences. The program is presented by senior members of the judiciary to share their knowledge and experience.

The Court also organizes a one-day virtual JYFTY program (Judging in Your First Three Years), which is offered every year and covers various topics of interest to new Justices and Justices of the Peace.

Members of the judiciary from across the province organize several lunch programs each year. All Justices and Justices of the Peace can attend these programs through video conference and more recently on Webex. In the past two years, these are some of the topics covered in lunch sessions:

- Child Support Resolution Program
- Alberta Health Services Provincial Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act (PChAD) Program

- Conditional Sentence Orders
- Technology and the Courts
- Cultural Dimensions of Judging
- Mental Health in the courts
- Restorative Justice
- An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families
- Sentence Calculation
- Bail changes and variations
- Privacy and Access
- New Criminal Rules of Court

BENCH BOOKS

Members of the judiciary and legal counsel have prepared Civil, Criminal, Child Protection and Justice of the Peace bench books that offer guidance to Justices and Justices of the Peace on different topics. The Judicial Education Committee coordinates periodic reviews of the bench books.

The Court is a court of statutory jurisdiction, which means that its Justices may exercise authority in areas that have been defined in a statute.

Judicial Independence and Judicial Accountability

Judicial independence is a fundamental pillar of any democratic society, ensuring the fair and impartial administration of justice. It refers to the concept that judges should be free from external pressures and influences, allowing them to make decisions based solely on the merits of the case and in accordance with the law. The importance of judicial independence cannot be overstated, as it safeguards the principles of fairness, equality, and the Rule of Law.

The Rule of Law is a political and judicial philosophy that encompasses many concepts including that all citizens and institutions within a country, state, or community are accountable to the same laws, including lawmakers and leaders.

Judicial independence fosters public confidence in the legal system. When people perceive that judges are impartial and free from external influences, they are more likely to trust in the fairness of court proceedings and accept the outcomes, even if they disagree with them. This trust is essential for the stability of society and the respect for the Rule of Law.

To preserve judicial independence, there are three important safeguards in place:

- security of tenure
- financial security
- administrative independence

Judicial independence does not, however, mean that there are no checks and balances within the Court. Decisions of the Court are subject to review by the superior courts of the province.

While it is the role of the appellate courts to correct legal errors, there is also a robust system of self-regulation within the Court. This system, established by the *Court of Justice Act* and the *Judicature Act*, is in place to ensure that

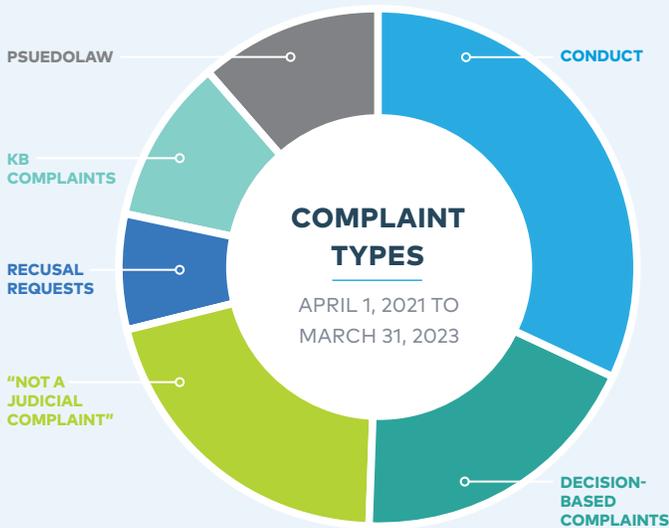
accountability within the Judiciary is maintained and that justice is not only done, but is seen to be done.

Judicial Complaints

Complaints about the conduct or competence of a Justice or Justice of the Peace may be directed to the Chief Justice or to the Alberta Judicial Council. As authorized by the *Court of Justice Act* and the *Judicature Act*, each of these has the ability to review and inquire into complaints. Upon review, they can take any action considered necessary including dismissal of the complaint, corrective measures, reprimand, or referral of the complaint to an inquiry. All complainants receive a written response advising them of the outcome of their complaint, as well as the reasons for same.

In the period from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2023 (since the publication of the previous biennial report), the Chief Justice has reviewed 97 complaints. Of these, 31 were determined to fall within the scope of a complaint as judicially defined and were subject to review. The remaining complaints were variously classified as pertaining to the decision of the Justice or Justice of the Peace; requests for recusal or alternate Justices; dealing with pseudolaw; dealing with justices of other courts or otherwise not a judicial complaint.

The Rule of law is a political and judicial philosophy that encompasses many concepts including that all citizens and institutions within a country, state, or community are accountable to the same laws, including lawmakers and leaders.



CONDUCT | 32.0%
Complaints relating to a Justice or JP's tone, attitude, or commentary. This also applies to perceptions of bias, favoritism, etc.

RECUSAL REQUESTS | 7.2%
Complaints that request a Justice or JP be removed from certain files and courtrooms.

DECISION-BASED COMPLAINTS | 18.6%
Complaints that primarily pertain to a dissatisfactory decision made by a Justice or JP.

KB COMPLAINTS | 10.3%
Complaints pertaining to matters in the Court of King's Bench.

"NOT A JUDICIAL COMPLAINT" | 20.6%
Complaints that do not pertain to a Justice or JP, but rather general grievances about the legal system as a whole Crown Prosecutors, Legal Aid, Police, etc.

PSUEDOLAW | 11.3%
Complaints that contain legalese and false rules that purport to be law. For example, Freeman-on-the-Land, Detaxers, Organized Pseudo legal Commercial Argument Litigants, etc.

Of the complaints received during this period, 67 cases required no further action, ten were forwarded to of Court of King's Bench based on subject matter, six remain ongoing and three resulted in corrective measures.



"NO FURTHER ACTION" | 69.1%
The complaint has been investigated and the allegations are unsubstantiated, the complaint is not within the scope of the OCJ, or the matter is still before the courts.

CORRECTIVE MEASURES REQUIRED | 3.1%
The complaint has been investigated and allegations of misconduct are substantiated. Corrective measures will be initiated or are in progress.

FORWARDED TO KB | 10.3%
The complaint has been forwarded to the Court of King's Bench and the complainant has been advised of the same.

OTHER | 11.3%
This category includes complaints that were not responded to for reasons including anonymity or circumstances involving vexatious or repeated complaints.

ONGOING | 20.6%
The investigation into complaint is ongoing or the file has not been closed.

WORK OF THE COURT

Civil Division

The Civil Division of the Alberta Court of Justice provides a simple, affordable, and accessible means to resolve most types of private disputes, including landlord and tenant matters. Some parties choose not to hire a lawyer to represent them, but others may have a lawyer or agent to represent them at their own expense. The maximum amount that may be claimed in the Alberta Court of Justice Civil Division is \$50,000. If the claim exceeds \$50,000 or involves matters that cannot be heard in the Alberta Court of Justice, the claim must be filed in the Court of King’s Bench.

Effective August 1, 2023, the civil claims limit of the Alberta Court of Justice will be increased from \$50,000 to \$100,000. This significant increase in the civil limit follows the amendments to the *Court of Justice Act* that occurred on December 15, 2022, when the Government of Alberta passed Bill 5, the *Justice Statutes Amendment Act*. It is the

first increase in the civil claims limit since 2014. The *Justice Statutes Amendment Act* also provides for a potential future increase in the civil limit to \$200,000 if approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council by way of regulation. The Court of Justice civil division is designed to deal with disputes as expeditiously and inexpensively as possible. The increase in the civil claims limit will allow more Albertans to have timely and effective access to justice.

The Civil Division has jurisdiction over certain civil disputes as specified in the *Court of Justice Act*. These disputes include claims for debt and damages, often arising out of contract, negligence, or both. Typical matters heard by the Justices of the Civil Division are claims for breach of contract (sale of goods, consumer protection, unpaid loans, faulty workmanship), motor vehicle accidents, wrongful dismissal, and commercial and residential tenancy matters.

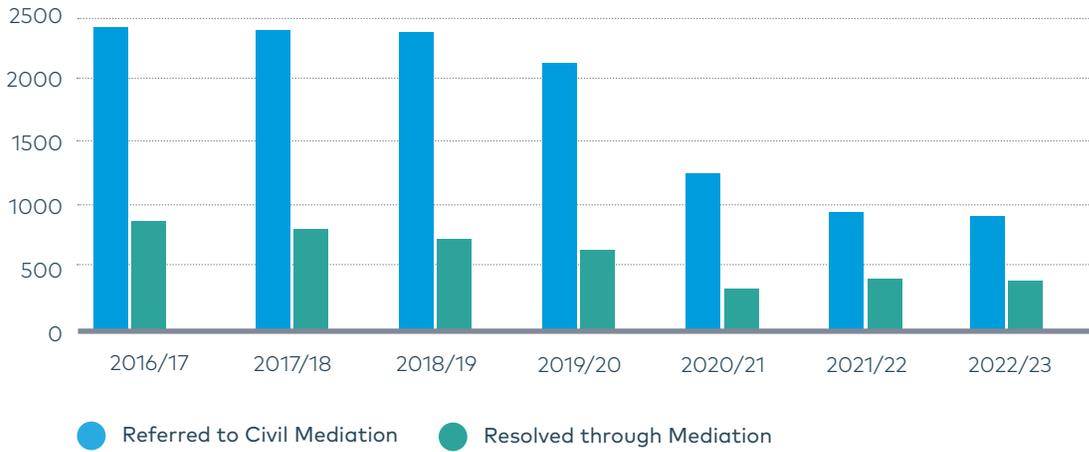
CIVIL DIVISION STATISTICS

STAGE	DESCRIPTION	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
FILE CIVIL CLAIM	Number of claims commenced	17,980	16,182	15,740	14,692	9,197	9,863	10,741
FILE DISPUTE NOTE /COUNTER CLAIM	Number of dispute note/counter claims filed by defendant	5,697	5,883	5,257	4,916	3,544	3,280	3,378
	Number of cases where defendant is noted in default	6,574	6,617	5,666	2,410	1,471	1,467	1,612
CIVIL MEDIATION	Number of cases mediated	2,394	2,355	2,341	2,104	1,235	933	897
	Number of cases resolved through mediation	847	797	720	634	322	413	393
JUDICIAL TRIAGE	Number of cases resolved prior to trial	2,109	1,955	1,297	1,445	1,425	1,271	1,244
	Number of trials scheduled where a resolution has not been reached	3,176	2,971	2,941	2,819	2,278	2,128	2,210
TRIAL	Number of trials conducted	1,067	1,016	1,387	1,264	769	733	855

TRIALS SCHEDULED, ACTIONS RESOLVED PRIOR TO TRIAL, AND TRIAL HEARD



ACTIONS REFERRED TO CIVIL MEDIATION AND ACTIONS RESOLVED THROUGH MEDIATION





Criminal Division

The Criminal Divisions of the Alberta Court of Justice are tasked with determining the guilt or innocence of individuals accused of committing crimes. The Court evaluates evidence presented by the prosecution and the defence based on the principles of due process and the Rule of Law and makes a decision regarding the defendant’s culpability.

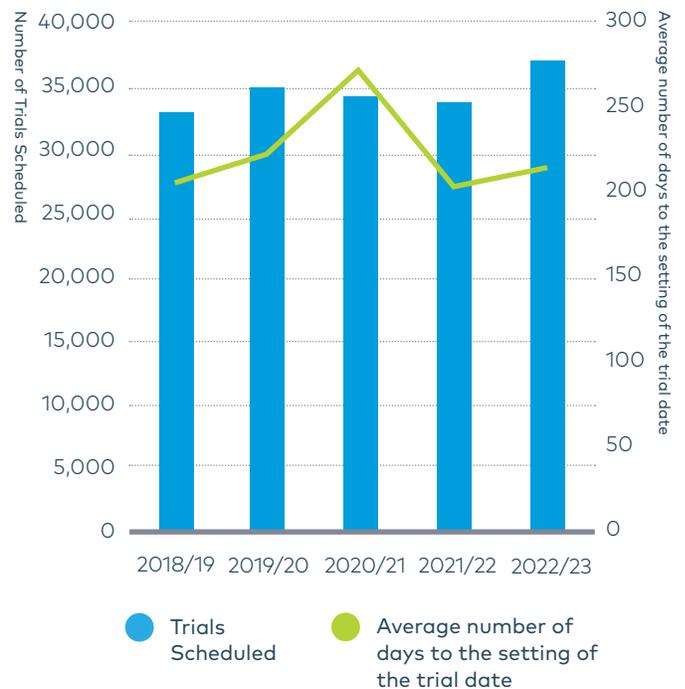
If the defendant is found guilty, criminal courts are responsible for imposing appropriate penalties, such as fines, probation, imprisonment, or a combination thereof. The severity of the punishment is determined based on the nature of the crime committed, relevant laws, and sentencing guidelines.

In Alberta, all criminal court appearances start in the Court of Justice, and more than 95 per cent of them end there. The Court handles first appearances, entry of pleas, bail hearings, preliminary inquiries, the trial and the sentencing of all prosecutions where the Crown proceeds by summary conviction and the majority of those where the proceedings are by Indictment.

CASES COMMENCED, BAIL HEARINGS, AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS TO FIRST APPEARANCE



TRIAL SCHEDULED AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS TO SETTING TRIAL DATE



CRIMINAL DIVISION STATISTICS

STAGE	DESCRIPTION	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
ARREST	Number of cases commenced	115,921	120,876	129,364	132,302	108,519	106,051	105,515
BAIL HEARING	Number of bail hearings	65,121	57,583	60,537	57,737	39,744	44,802	45,310
FIRST COURT APPEARANCE	Average number of days to the first court appearance	12	12	16	16	18	10	8
PRE-TRIAL APPEARANCES	Average number of appearances for cases resolved prior to setting a trial date	4.7	4.8	5.1	5.4	6.4	7.1	7.5
	Number of cases resolved prior to setting a trial date.	82,540	86,191	85,454	89,967	84,337	75,420	75,883
	Percentage of cases resolved prior to setting a trial date	71.2%	71.3%	66.1%	68.0%	77.7%	71.1%	71.9%
	Average number of days for cases resolved prior to setting a trial date	165	157	141	145	146	183	249
TRIAL DATE SET	Number of trials scheduled	30,719	39,950	33,314	35,006	34,408	34,056	37,323
	Average number days to the setting of the trial date	152	148	207	225	273	210	216
TRIAL PREPARATION	Number of cases resolved after trial date set and prior to the trial	26,227	25,937	28,561	30,866	23,088	21,808	24,126
	Percentage of cases resolved after trial date set and prior to trial	85.4%	64.9%	85.7%	88.2%	67.1%	64.0%	64.6%
TRIAL	Number of trials heard	5,446	5,105	4,890	4,784	2,884	4,421	5,222
	Percentage of cases commenced where a trial is conducted	4.7%	4.2%	3.8%	3.6%	2.7%	4.2%	4.9%
	Average number of days to trial date	374	404	219	246	309	219	236
	Average number of appearances for cases where a trial is held	6.8	6.8	7	7.2	8.7	9.7	10.1
CASE CONCLUDED	Number of cases concluded	113,259	116,141	118,347	125,617	110,320	101,667	105,402
	Change in the total inventory in the court system	2,662	4,735	11,017	6,685	-1,801	4,384	3,848
	Clearance rate — Cases concluded as a percentage of cases commenced	97.7%	96.1%	91.5%	94.9%	101.7%	95.9%	99.89%

CASES COMMENCED AND CASES CONCLUDED



The Criminal Divisions of the Alberta Court of Justice are tasked with determining the guilt or innocence of individuals accused of committing crimes. The Court evaluates evidence presented by the prosecution and the defence based on the principles of due process and the Rule of Law and makes a decision regarding the defendant's culpability.



Family Justices hear applications for child and spousal support, parenting arrangements, private guardianship and all child protection cases.

Family and Youth Division

The Family and Youth Division handles legal matters involving family law, child protection, youth justice and emergency applications under provincial legislation.

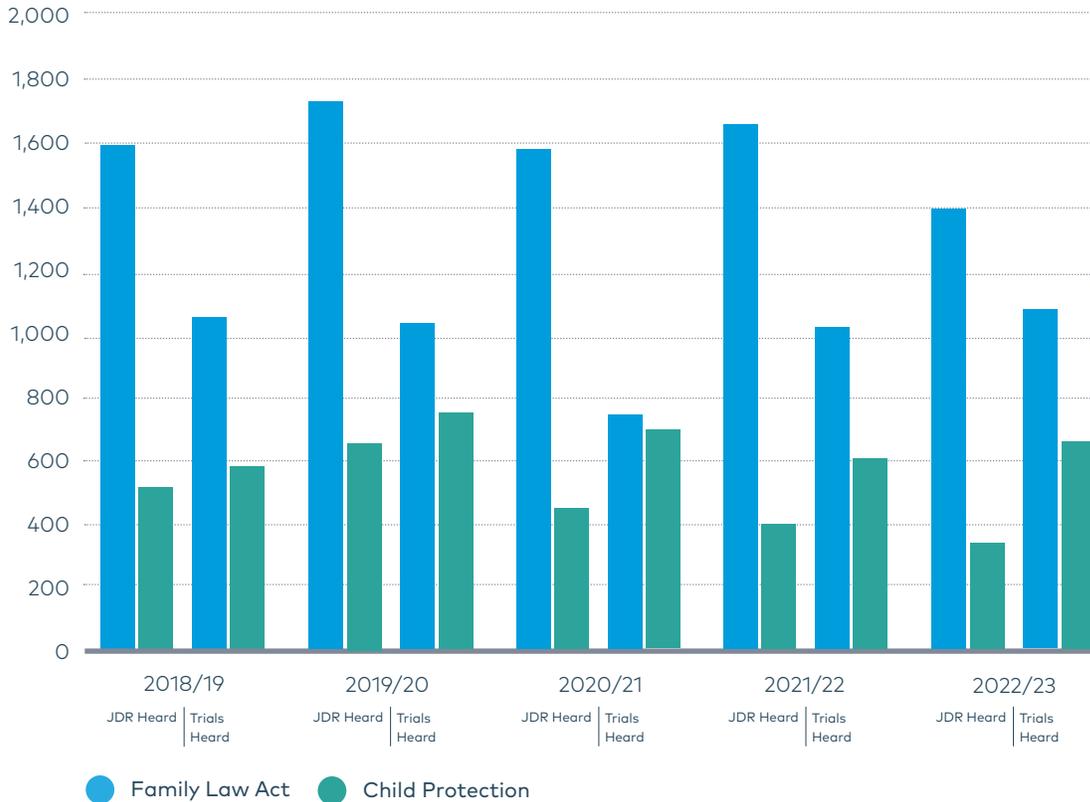
Family Justices hear applications for child and spousal support, parenting arrangements, private guardianship and all child protection cases. The Alberta Court of Justice does not have jurisdiction to decide divorce applications nor claims with respect to property rights arising from a breakdown of a relationship – in Alberta, these matters are handled by the Court of King's Bench.

Canada maintains a separate youth criminal justice system that is distinct from the adult criminal justice system. The youth criminal justice system is designed to address the specific needs and circumstances of young offenders who are under the age of 18. In Alberta, these matters are handled by the Court of Justice's Family and Youth Division.

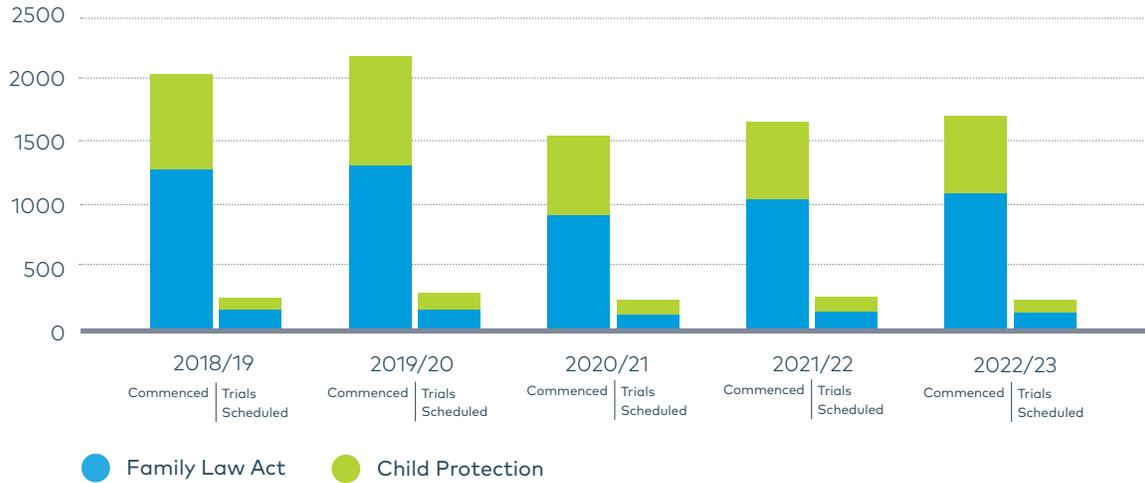
FAMILY STATISTICS

STAGE	DESCRIPTION	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
APPLICATION FILING	Number of actions commenced							
	Family Law Act	10,528	11,508	12,813	13,167	9,236	10,625	11,182
	Child Protection	6,970	7,165	7,554	8,707	6,316	6,131	6,029
TRIAL SET	Number of trial dates set							
	Family Law Act	1,303	907	1,602	1,718	1,235	1,518	1,465
	Child Protection	754	899	913	1,283	1,192	1,130	1,064
JUDICIAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION	Number of actions resolved through Judicial resolutions							
	Family Law Act	1,483	1,470	1,588	1,724	1,574	1,650	1,383
	Child Protection	385	472	511	647	444	394	334
TRIAL	Number of trials conducted							
	Family Law Act	793	907	1,042	1,023	740	1,015	1,073
	Child Protection	441	558	576	748	690	601	655

JUDICIAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION HEARD AND TRIALS HEARD



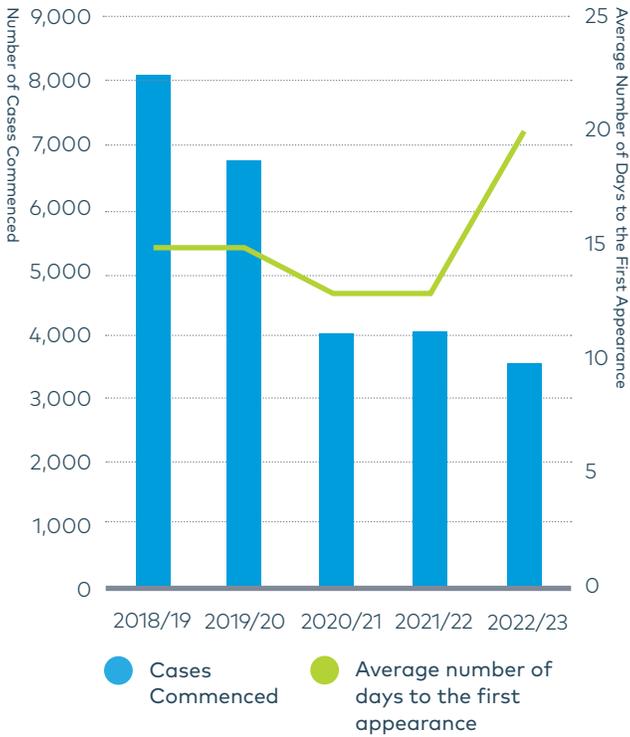
FAMILY LAW ACT AND CHILD PROTECTION FILES COMMENCED AND TRIALS



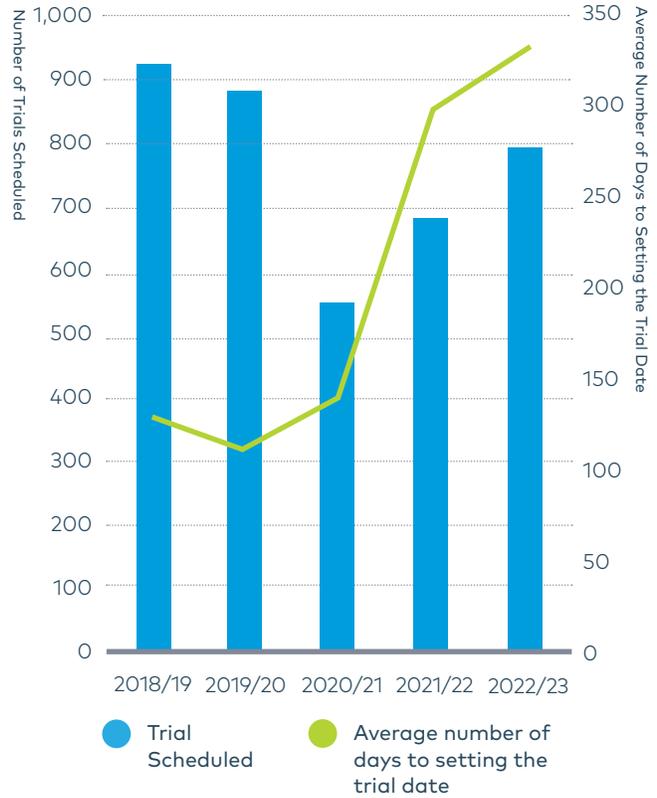
Youth Statistics

	DESCRIPTION	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
ARREST	Number of cases commenced	7,906	7,811	8,101	6,784	4,020	4,091	3,559
BAIL HEARING	Number of bail hearings	Not Available	1,736	2,378	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
FIRST COURT APPEARANCE	Average number of days to the first court appearance	15	15	13	13	21	16	12
PRE-TRIAL APPEARANCES	Average number of appearances for cases resolved prior to setting a trial date	6.1	5.9	6.1	6.9	7.3	7.8	7.5
	Number of cases resolved prior to setting a trial date.	7,403	7,239	7,339	6,658	4,129	3,386	3,629
	Percentage of cases resolved prior to setting a trial date	93.6%	92.7%	90.6%	98.1%	102.7%	82.8%	102.0%
	Average number of days for cases resolved prior to setting a trial date	103	99	110	112	115	111	87
TRIAL DATE SET	Number of trials scheduled	1,354	1,153	931	885	554	679	796
	Average number of days to the setting of the trial date	118	127	130	112	142	298	332
TRIAL	Number of trials heard	223	183	161	141	89	100	112
	Average number of days to trial date	245	255	268	250	286	354	373
CASE CONCLUDED	Number of cases concluded	8,757	8,187	8,220	7,305	4,893	3,798	4,092
	Clearance rate — Cases concluded as a percentage of cases commenced	110.8%	104.8%	101.5%	107.7%	121.7%	92.8%	115.0%

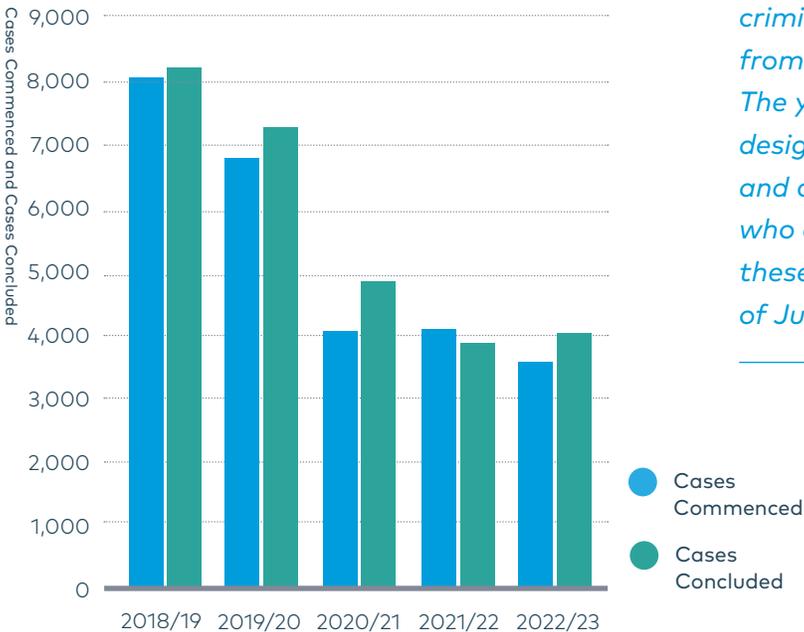
YOUTH CASES COMMENCED AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS TO THE FIRST APPEARANCE



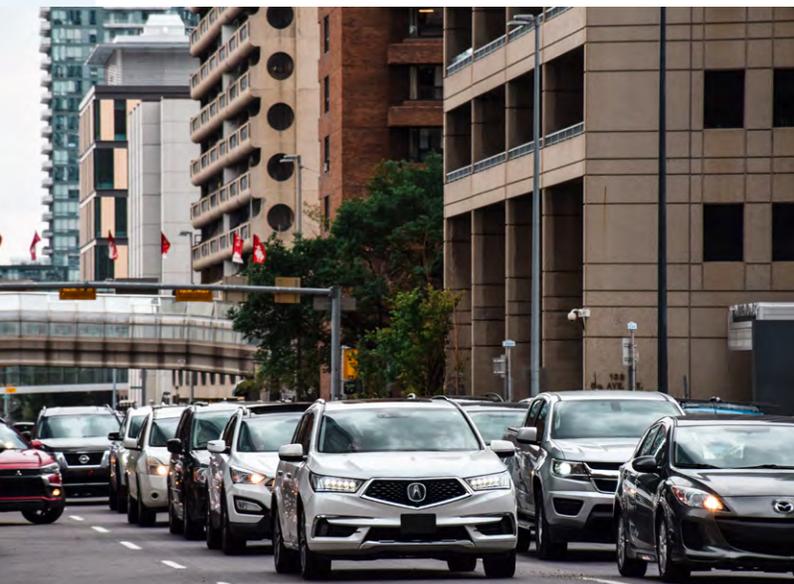
YOUTH TRIALS SCHEDULED AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS TO SETTING THE TRIAL DATE



YOUTH CASES COMMENCED AND CASES CONCLUDED



Canada maintains a separate youth criminal justice system that is distinct from the adult criminal justice system. The youth criminal justice system is designed to address the specific needs and circumstances of young offenders who are under the age of 18. In Alberta, these matters are handled by the Court of Justice's Family and Youth Division.



Traffic Division

Despite its name, the Traffic Division of the Alberta Court of Justice is not limited to only hearing traffic-related offences. This Court deals with offences pursuant to provincial statutes and regulations, municipal bylaws, and a few specified federal statutes.

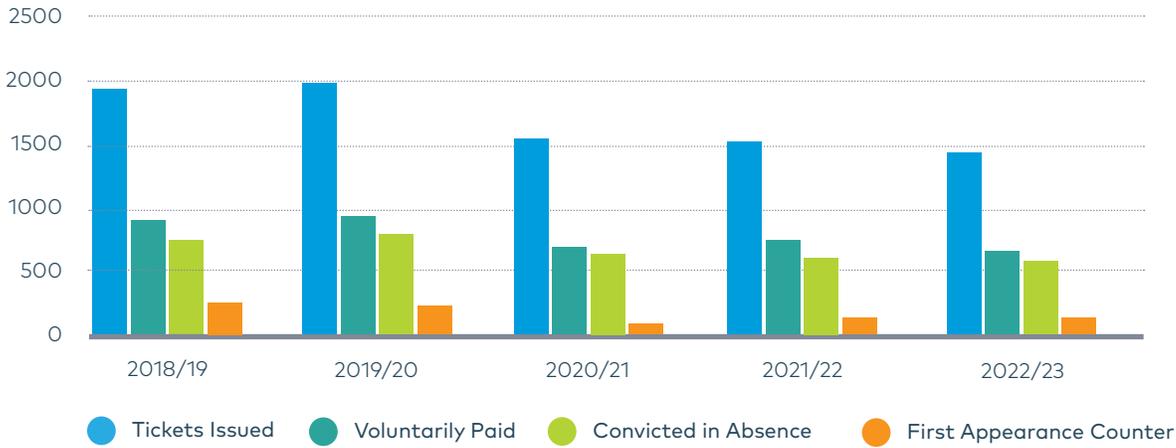
Trials in traffic court are usually heard by a Justice of the Peace, although some matters in rural and remote locations are heard by a Justice. There are also some matters that are required to be heard by a Justice, which include:

- any proceeding that involves the death of an individual;
- any proceeding that involves the determination of whether any Charter rights have been infringed or denied;
- any issue relating to the constitutional validity of any law; or
- any proceeding that involves a determination of any aboriginal or treaty rights.

When a person receives a ticket, they may be required to appear in traffic court to contest the ticket or to address the charges against them. Traffic courts are responsible for reviewing evidence, hearing arguments from both the accused individual and the prosecuting party (typically a law enforcement officer) and determining guilt or innocence.

STAGE	DESCRIPTION	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
TICKETS ISSUED	Number of tickets issued	2,144,270	2,020,452	1,941,982	1,998,082	1,561,598	1,508,690	1,428,388
VOLUNTARILY PAID	Number of tickets paid without appearing at the counter	1,037,363	991,851	941,748	968,298	722,302	751,928	666,384
	Percentage paid without appearance	48.4%	49.1%	48.5%	48.5%	46.3%	49.8%	46.7%
CONVICTED IN ABSENCE	Number of individuals not appearing by the day specified and found guilty in absence	908,589	864,943	807,988	861,695	685,156	671,882	584,234
	Percentage of tickets issued	42.4%	42.8%	41.6%	43.1%	43.9%	44.5%	40.9%
TICKET PAID	Number of tickets paid after consulting prosecutor	168,973	157,930	151,742	132,453	34,381	58,986	67,208
	Percentage paid at counter	7.9%	7.8%	7.8%	6.6%	2.2%	3.9%	4.7%
TICKET QUASHED	Number of quashed tickets based on further information presented	48,673	33,173	29,132	24,348	14,739	15,965	19,297
TRIAL DATE SET	Number of traffic trial dates set	37,131	35,116	36,022	38,339	33,191	42,988	32,969
TRIALS HEARD	Number of trials held	4,566	3,680	2,472	2,099	34	3,552	908
	Percentage of traffic trials heard	12.3%	10.5%	6.9%	5.5%	0.1%	8.3%	2.8%

NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED, VOLUNTARILY PAID, CONVICTED IN ABSENCE, AND APPEARANCE AT THE COUNTER

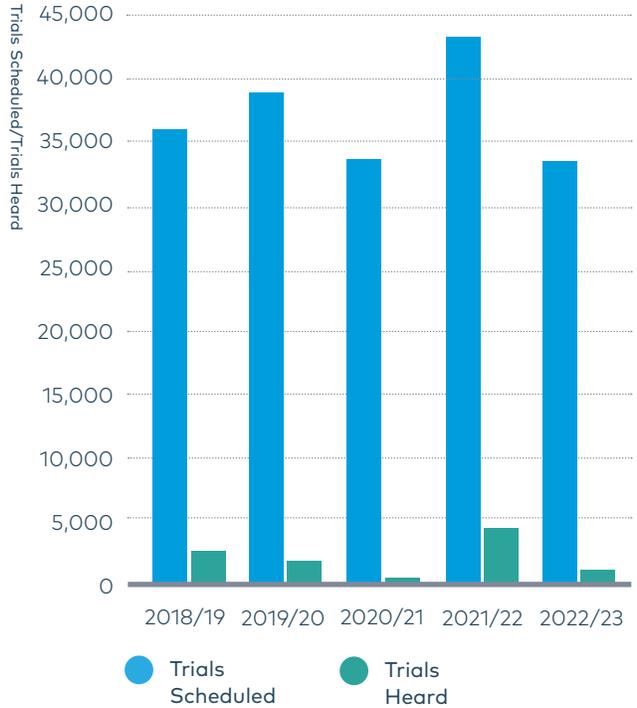


This Court deals with offences pursuant to provincial statutes and regulations, municipal bylaws, and a few specified federal statutes.

FIRST APPEARANCE COUNTER TICKETS



TRIALS SCHEDULED AND TRIALS HEARD



Hearing Office

The Alberta Court of Justice Hearing Office sits in two locations, with matters presided over by Justices of the Peace handling a wide variety of urgent matters. These offices operate via remote hearings, and hear matters from across the entire province, 365 days a year and 24 hours a day.

The Hearing Office:

- Receive Informations, consider and order process (warrant for arrest or summons); confirm or cancel police process.
- Issue subpoenas.
- Conduct bail hearings. All criminal offence bail matters have a first appearance at the Hearing Office.
- Issue warrants as authorized by the *Criminal Code*.
- Hear and determine applications for sealing orders on search warrant and related applications.

- Consider applications for and authorize child apprehensions under the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act*, the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* and the *Drug-Endangered Children Act*.
- Consider applications for and grant Emergency Protection Orders under the *Protection Against Family Violence Act*.
- Receive informations from private complainants and set them down for process hearing before a Justice of the Alberta Court of Justice.
- Take guilty pleas on most provincial offences and adjudicate accordingly.

The Hearing Office has locations in Edmonton and Calgary. The office in Calgary handles applications from Red Deer south to the border of the province. The office in Edmonton handles matters from north of Red Deer to the northern border of the province.



TOTAL NUMBER OF BAIL APPLICATIONS PER FISCAL YEAR



For the purposes of reporting, the work of the Hearing Office is divided into three categories based on priority and complexity.

Priority 1 (P1) applications generally require the quickest attention, either because of the seriousness of the underlying application or the urgency of the application due to statutory time limits or investigative urgency. These include Emergency Protection Orders (EPO), Child Apprehension Orders under the *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act* (CYFEA) relating to child protection, drug endangered and/or orders relating to the protection of sexually exploited children, *Missing Persons Act* matters, search warrants, blood warrants, tracking device warrants, urgent production orders, urgent arrest warrants and all other warrant type applications deemed to be urgent and time sensitive.

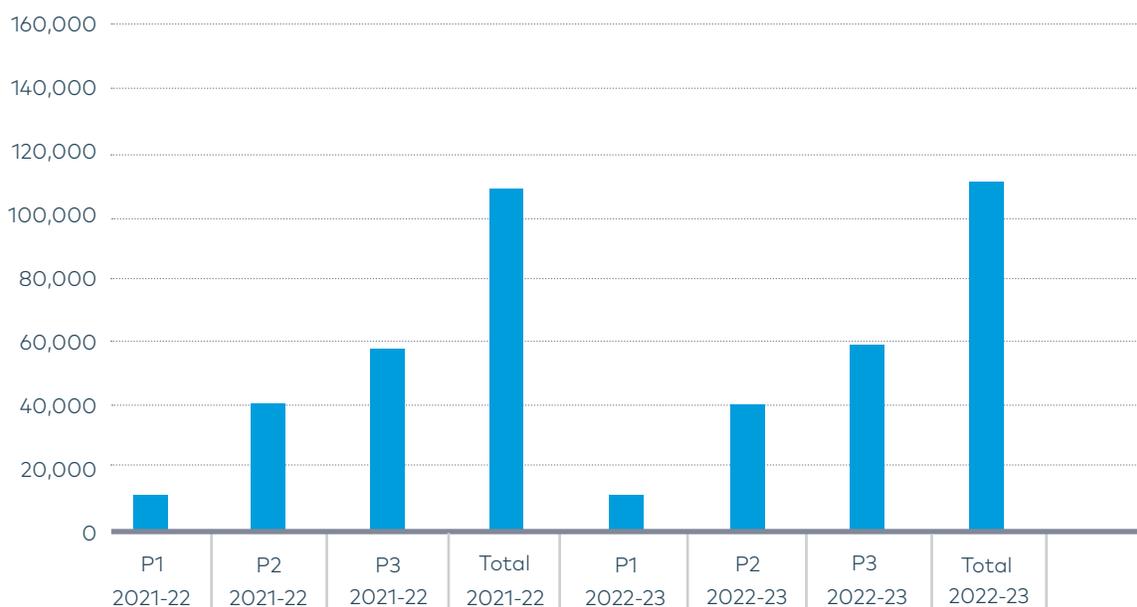
P1 applications also include bail applications where the accused requires a bail hearing and is in jeopardy of going over 24 hours since detention by police (within a two-hour limit of the midnight

closure or will reach 24 hours prior to the next bail hearing court sitting at 8:00 a.m. the following day). Except for urgent bail hearings, P1 applications are heard 365 days per year on a 24-hour basis.

Priority 2 (P2) applications include bail hearings, six-day remands for out-of-province warrants, guilty pleas on outstanding warrants for provincial and municipal offences only, administrative releases and other applications that deal with the detention or liberty of persons in custody. P2 applications are heard 365 days a year on a 16-hour per day basis (8:00 a.m. to midnight).

Priority 3 (P3) applications are considered the least urgent of all applications. These applications usually relate to the swearing/receiving (under s 508.1 of the *Criminal Code*) of Form 2 Informations and requests for process often referred to as process applications. P3 applications also include non-urgent production orders. P3 applications are heard 365 days a year on a 16-hour per day basis (8:00 a.m. to midnight).

TOTAL MATTERS



Fatality Inquires

A fatality inquiry is a legal process conducted to investigate the circumstances surrounding a person's death. It is typically initiated when a death occurs under suspicious, unexpected, or unusual circumstances, such as accidents, suicides, homicides, or deaths that occur while the person is in custody.

The purpose of a fatality inquiry is to determine the cause and manner of death, as well as to identify any contributing factors and make recommendations to prevent similar deaths in the future.

In Alberta, fatality inquiries proceed before a Justice whose jurisdiction is derived from the *Fatality Inquiries Act*. In the two years covered by this report, a total of 56 fatality inquiries were heard. A list of fatality inquiry reports can be found on the Government of Alberta website at alberta.ca/fatality-inquiries.aspx.

Specialized Courts

The past 40 years have brought a lot of change to the Alberta Court of Justice, with the recognition that the traditional adversarial process is not necessarily appropriate for every population or situation. As a result, the Alberta Court of Justice has created specialized courts to deal with cases in a therapeutic and culturally appropriate manner.

There are several different forms of specialized courts that are operated in communities across the province responding to the needs of Albertans interacting with the justice system. These courts include:

- Mental Health Courts
- Drug Treatment Courts
- Intimate Partner Violence Courts
- Indigenous Courts

In recognition that these courts often have lower

recidivism rates, and a significant benefit to the participants and the community, several of these courts were expanded during the reporting period from 2021 to 2023.

- Red Deer and Grande Prairie Drug Treatment Courts were launched in late 2021. In December 2022, the Court of Justice launched a Drug Treatment Court location in Fort McMurray in partnership with the Pastew Place Detoxification Centre.
- This brings the total of Drug Treatment Courts operating in the province to seven.
- In February of 2022, the Court of Justice launched the Edmonton Indigenous Court.

EDMONTON MENTAL HEALTH COURT

Mental Health Court helps address the overrepresentation of people with mental illness in the justice system by focusing on underlying mental health problems that often contribute to repeated criminal behaviour.

Mental Health Court is available for adults (aged 18 years or older) who have been charged with a criminal offence and have an ongoing mental health issue that affects or impairs judgment. Individuals with a brain injury or head trauma, including fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) in some cases, and those with mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and major depression are considered.

DRUG TREATMENT COURT

Drug Treatment Court is intended to break the cycle of criminal behavior driven by drug addiction, by offering participants a chance to avoid prison and complete a drug treatment program in the case of non-violent offences. The program is comprehensive and aims to reduce the number of crimes committed to support drug dependence through judicial supervision, drug abuse treatment, frequent drug testing, incentives, sanctions and social services support. Calgary,

Indigenous Courts provide a culturally relevant, restorative, and holistic system of justice for Indigenous individuals, including offenders, victims and the community harmed by an offender's actions. This alternative court focuses on a restorative justice approach to crime through peacemaking and connecting accused people to their cultures and communities.

Edmonton, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Fort McMurray, and Grande Prairie have Drug Treatment Court programs.

Three of these locations first started their Drug Treatment Court programs in this reporting period:

- Red Deer opened in October 2021
- Grande Prairie opened in November of 2021
- Fort McMurray opened in December of 2022

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE COURT

Intimate Partner Violence Courts recognize the unique characteristics of violence between family members. They emphasize the importance of early and effective intervention in abusive situations in order to increase victim safety and allow for a greater chance of offender rehabilitation.

These courts serve to hear cases involving allegations of violence between intimate partners, including allegations of harassment, elder abuse, and crimes against children under 16 years of age. Intimate Partner Violence Courts operate in Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, and Grande Prairie.

INDIGENOUS COURTS

Indigenous Courts provide a culturally relevant, restorative, and holistic system of justice for Indigenous individuals, including offenders,



On September 30 2022, Judges and court staff participated in educational and cultural events in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Left to right: legal counsel Clarissa Pearce, Deputy Chief Justice Joanne Durant, legal counsel Laura Marr, and articling student MacKenzie Vozza.

victims and the community harmed by an offender's actions. This alternative court focuses on a restorative justice approach to crime through peacemaking and connecting accused people to their cultures and communities. It deals primarily with bail and sentencing hearings and is open to any offender who is Indigenous and chooses to have matters addressed.

There are many other locations in which Indigenous practices have been incorporated into court proceedings. Presently, the Court is in discussions with several Indigenous communities regarding the establishment of Indigenous courts to meet the unique needs of those communities. There are Indigenous Courts in large centres such as Edmonton and Calgary, as well as in Indigenous communities in various parts of the province

Outreach to Public and Profession

The effective functioning of a court system depends on the understanding and confidence of members of the public. As such, it is incumbent on the Court and on its judicial officers to participate in educational programs and public outreach.

While much of this work faced significant impediments during the COVID pandemic, members of the Judiciary have conducted outreach through teleconferences, speaking at local bar association groups, presenting to gatherings of the bar association, and doing outreach with local primary schools. The school tours program, which was put on hold during the pandemic, is expected to be renewed in the upcoming school year.

Individual members of the Judiciary participate in outreach as guest lecturers at the province's two accredited law schools, as well as pre-law programs, and criminology programs. Many of our Justices have also been invited to speak at professional development conferences for lawyers, paralegals, and other legal professionals.

Some of the Court's major public outreach programs are:

Court Clerkship Program

The Court offers two clerkship positions for recent law school graduates in both Edmonton and Calgary. Each student-at-law is assigned to an individual Justice, who serves as the student's principal.

Law Day

Law Day is a national event organized by the Canadian Bar Association, held every April, that celebrates the signing of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.



Indigenous Career Day (in partnership with the Court of King's Bench)

Indigenous high school students from Edmonton and the surrounding area come to the courthouse for a day of observations, discussions with Justices and presentations from various members of the legal community.

Indigenous Judicial Shadowing Program

As part of the Court's Indigenous Justice Strategy, the Court of Justice introduced an Indigenous Judicial Shadowing Program in 2023. This program provides an opportunity for lawyers, articling students and law students who identify as Indigenous to gain exposure and insights into the workings of the front lines of the judicial system through meeting with and shadowing Justices of the Court of Justice and Justices of the Peace.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

The Court has declared September 30 to be a day for learning and reflection for the judiciary and staff who are encouraged to attend local celebrations, commemorations, and cultural events. In 2022, judicial support staff and legal counsel participated in an Elder-led educational session. This session, which took place in person in the Indigenous Courtrooms at both the Edmonton Law Courts and the Calgary Courts Centre, was broadcasted to staff province wide.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND CHANGES

New Judicial Appointments

As of April 1, 2021, the Alberta Court of Justice had a judicial complement of 136 full-time-equivalent Justices. Over the course of the two-year reporting period, with Justices retiring or moving to part-time or supernumerary work, the Court lost the equivalent of 27 full-time Justices.

In July 2021, eight new Justices were appointed to the Court:

Justice G. Auger	Justice J. Neustater
Justice G. Hatch	Justice T.M. Scrase
Justice S. Mah	Justice G. Shannon
Justice K. Molle	Justice O. Shoyele

In May 2022, 12 new Justices were appointed, including an expansion of the overall Judicial complement, bringing the Court up to 140 full-time-equivalent Justices:

Justice G. Annetts	Justice K. Linton
Justice A. Argento	Justice B. Nordin
Justice C. Du	Justice K. Palichuk
Justice D. Findlay	Justice G. Putnam
Justice J. Heudes	Justice L. Tchir
Justice S. Hinkley	Justice J. Williams

In July 2022, five new Justices of the Peace were appointed to the Court:

Justice of the Peace S. Chowdhury	Justice of the Peace M. Gallo
Justice of the Peace E. Vomberg	Justice of the Peace P. Barber
Justice of the Peace D. Lefebvre	

In October 2022, four additional Justices were appointed:

Justice F. Bosscha	Justice T.C. Marriott
Justice I. Maharaj	Justice J.J. Stuffco

Finally, in March 2023, three Justices and four Justices of the Peace were appointed:

Justice C. Downey	Justice of the Peace A. Sabo
Justice C.A. Regier	
Justice M.J. Shaften	Justice of the Peace M. St-Germain
Justice of the Peace C.T.A. McDougall	Justice of the Peace K. Wong

In total, over the course of the two-year period, there were 31 appointments to the Alberta Court of Justice. These appointments, targeted at locations in the province that had experienced Judicial retirements or population increases help the Court continue to serve its mandate of providing accessible and timely justice to all Albertans.

Changing Leadership

The Chief Justice and Deputy Chief Justice of the Alberta Court of Justice are each appointed on a seven-year term. Neither of these roles were appointed during this reporting period.

The nine Assistant Chief Justices, who are each responsible for one of the regions and divisions, are appointed to five-year terms. During this reporting period, there were four changes in our complement of Assistant Chief Justices.

On May 30, 2022, Assistant Chief Justice J.E. Schaffter, who was responsible for the Edmonton Region, came to the end of her term. Justice C.G. Purvis was appointed as the new Assistant Chief Justice for the region.

On September 20, 2022, Justice G.W. Sharek, who was responsible for the Civil Division, came to the end of his term. Justice D.B. Higa was appointed as the new Assistant Chief Justice for the division.

On October 31, 2021, Assistant Chief Justice J.A. Hunter, who was responsible for the Central Region, came to the end of his term. Justice R.A. Snider was appointed as the new Assistant Chief Justice for the region.

In February 2021 (during the previous reporting period), Assistant Chief Justice M.J. Durant, who was responsible for the Calgary Criminal and Region, was elevated to the position of Deputy Chief Justice. On June 2, 2021, Justice J.B. Hawkes was appointed as the new Assistant Chief Justice for the region.

A New Name

On April 1, 2023, the Provincial Court of Alberta formally changed its name to the “Alberta Court of Justice.” This date may fall slightly outside of the timeframe of this report, but the majority of the work done to prepare for this transition was done in the preceding months. The name more accurately conveys the nature, purpose, and

independence of the Court’s work on behalf of Albertans.

After this name change has taken place, Judges are referred to as “Justices” within court proceedings and written correspondence. There is a grace period during which time filed documents that use the outdated name and terminology will be considered to be valid, and previous versions of court forms will be accepted.

Indigenous Justice Strategy

The Indigenous peoples who access the Alberta Court of Justice come from diverse communities, with distinct histories, needs and priorities. In recognition of the pervasive issues faced by these communities and individuals, the Court developed an Indigenous Justice Strategy that commits to taking concrete actions. These actions include:

- Supporting the establishment of restorative justice programs, Indigenous Courts and the incorporation of Indigenous principles into courts serving Indigenous communities
- Providing educational opportunities and resources so as to ensure that Justices, Justices of the Peace and staff have a broad-based understanding of the history, heritage, and laws of local Indigenous communities
- Engaging in relationship building with the leadership of Indigenous communities and Indigenous service providers
- Addressing access to justice issues by working to understand the structures, systems and processes that impede access amongst Indigenous peoples
- Encouraging Indigenous applications for employment in various capacities within the court system
- Incorporating Indigenous cultural practices in courthouses and courtrooms
- Establishing Indigenous Courts in collaboration with local Indigenous communities

- Shadowing opportunities for Indigenous lawyers and students
- Observing the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

However, the Indigenous Justice Strategy is a preliminary step. The Court recognizes its ongoing obligation to listen and engage in collaborative dialogue with Indigenous peoples and communities to better understand their distinct priorities.

The Indigenous Justice Strategy is intended to be a living document that evolves as the Court continues to work towards achieving its priority of providing a culturally relevant, restorative, and holistic system of justice for the Indigenous peoples and communities it serves.

New Criminal Rules

Although many court-related processes are enshrined in law, constitution, and statute, there are a significant number that are left to the discretion of the courts and the Justices. In order to ensure transparency and consistency, the leadership of the Alberta Court of Justice spent several years of discussion between regions, as well as consultation and engagement with stakeholders, to draft new Rules for Criminal Court in Alberta.

The fundamental objective of these Rules is to ensure that criminal proceedings before the Court are dealt with in a fair, efficient, orderly and consistent manner. The Rules detail how this objective will be achieved in a variety of different contexts and describes the responsibility of counsel in relation to those contexts. Rules identify fundamental objectives with a degree of formality and consistency.

Although the Court had planned to roll out the new Criminal Rules in April 2020, the pandemic delayed this. In November 2021, the new Criminal Rules were put into effect, and new fillable forms were made available.



Infrastructure

The Court has been a strong proponent of maintaining links to the communities it serves. By working closely with the province and numerous other stakeholders, we continue to establish new courthouses, and to upgrade existing ones to better serve the public, and to provide court hearings in the places where they are needed.

From 2021 to 2023, several important milestones took place from the perspective of court locations in Alberta: Red Deer, Brooks, Strathmore and Sherwood Park.

The Court of Justice has been involved in a multi-stakeholder project to replace the Red Deer Courthouse, which is currently at full capacity. The new facility will measure 313,200 square feet and include nine stories above grade, with two levels below grade. The modernized courthouse will feature 12 courtrooms, with room for future expansion to 16 courtrooms. Construction on this project began in September 2020, and is expected to be complete in early 2024.

In 2021, work began on the Brooks provincial building revitalization. Having first been identified in 2018 as needing upgrades to meet the requirements of a growing community, the Brooks provincial building includes the local courthouse. The renovations took place in stages with the courts holding area getting renovated in May 2021, while the courtrooms, judicial offices,



exhibit room, and other areas of the court getting upgraded in September 2022.

Media Accreditation

Public trust in the legal system is crucial for maintaining a just society. By allowing journalists to cover court cases, the legal system becomes more transparent, and the public gains insight into how justice is being administered. Justices and the journalists who cover them share an important goal: They want the public to receive accurate and understandable information about the courts and their work.

As such, the Alberta Court of Justice provides access to journalists and grants them some privileges. This includes the ability to use electronic recording devices in courtrooms to ensure accuracy, and access when possible to virtual courtrooms via teleconferencing. In order to make use of these privileges, journalists are asked to apply with the Court, and then fill out a legal undertaking affirming that they will not misuse these privileges.

In 2021, it was determined that the Alberta Court of Justice system of accrediting journalists was outdated. In addition, the Court of King's Bench had a separate system of accreditation that

caused confusion. In 2022, the two Courts worked together to develop a coherent and coordinated set of accreditation policies that are more rigorous, enforceable, and fair. This new media accreditation policy was launched in early 2023.

The Post-COVID Court

As concern about the COVID-19 pandemic began to wane mid-2022, court leadership began to discuss with cautious optimism what the post-COVID Court would look like.

In July 2022, the Court was able to end masking requirements in both the public areas of courthouses, as well as in secure workplaces. Masking within courtrooms is not mandatory but is subject to the discretion of the presiding Justice to require masking if circumstances so warrant.

In November 2022, restrictions were lifted on counsel, service providers and visitors accessing the secure areas of Alberta courthouses. At the same time, plexiglass barriers started to be removed in all courtrooms.

Other measures implemented to deal with pandemic restrictions such as remote appearances for certain cases and use of electronic documents (e.g., Digital Judicial Authorizations) and scheduling (e.g., Adjournment Digital Service) were found to bring efficiencies to the court process. These processes have persisted and are now being improved and expanded.

Public trust in the legal system is crucial for maintaining a just society. By allowing journalists to cover court cases, the legal system becomes more transparent, and the public gains insight into how justice is being administered.

PLANNING FOR TOMORROW

The Alberta Court of Justice is always looking to meet the challenges of tomorrow. As one of the most forward-looking court systems in the country, we have always been early adopters of new processes, technologies, and judicial paradigms that provide a more responsive and accessible system of justice.

The Court is committed to continuing to adapt to meet the changing needs of Albertans, and as such is continually involved in strategic planning for both the near-term and the long.

Strategic Plan

The Alberta Court of Justice has recognized the importance of strategic planning, which provides a roadmap for making decisions, directing activities, and focusing resources. The 2021–2024 Strategic Plan saw the Court identify the following as key areas of focus:

- Judicial Independence
- Access to Justice
- Judicial Education and other Judicial Supports
- Technology and Infrastructure
- Indigenous Initiatives
- Therapeutic and Specialized Courts
- The Role of Justices of the Peace
- Public Respect and Awareness

Based on these priorities, the Court identified a series of objectives and action items.

New Technology

Over the past two years, the Alberta Court of Justice has collaborated with various government departments to update systems and develop new applications to support access to justice for citizens across the province.

Email and Court File System Upgrade

With leadership from all three of the Alberta Courts and Court Technology Services, internal email and court file systems were redeveloped to support a greater ability to share, store and secure documents. Email and communication systems were also updated to allow faster communication and a better ability to provide secure messaging across the Alberta Courts.

Digital Judicial Authorizations

Work has continued work on Digital Judicial Authorizations (DJA), with regular use in Edmonton and plans to move to Calgary and other major cities over the next reporting cycle. The original project was started in 2020 and is intended to allow electronic delivery and processing of applications for warrants or orders under the *Criminal Code*.

Alberta Court of Justice Related Projects Coordinated by Justice Digital

Traffic Ticket Digital Service (TTDS) – This service is now live and simplifies how Albertans manage their traffic tickets through an online platform that provides options to pay fines, request additional time to pay, plead guilty and request a trial date, or dispute the infraction with the Alberta Crown Prosecution Service.



As one of the most forward-looking court systems in the country, we have always been early adopters of new processes, technologies, and judicial paradigms that provide a more responsive and accessible system of justice.

Adjournment Digital Service (ADS) – This service is now live and enables parties to a court matter to request first appearance adjournments for Court of Justice Criminal Adult cases online. This reduces or eliminates the requirement for counsel and accused persons to attend in-person at courthouses.

Transcripts Digital Service (TDS) – This service is live and streamlines ordering of transcripts for court proceedings, assignment to a transcriber, and payment and fulfilment of the orders digitally.

Courtroom Digital Service (CDS) – The CDS continues development and is in use across the province to allow judicial clerks to process endorsements digitally, ensuring accurate and timely capture of courtroom events and the production of digital records.

Judicial Scheduling – The scheduling of Judiciary with court resources across all locations is a complex operation, requiring input from stakeholders across the province. The initial stages of simplifying and integrating scheduling for judiciary are underway, with releases set over the next reporting period.

Virtual Courts – The initial work started during the pandemic has demonstrated that virtual and hybrid courts assist with the delivery of access to justice across the province. System evaluation and development are underway to standardize virtual and hybrid court service across the province.



CONCLUSION

The past two years have been challenging for the Court, but ones that – through the dedicated work of our Judiciary and staff – have seen resilience and success. The Court continues to handle a very high caseload, and manages to offer timely, impartial, and fair trials and hearings.

The past two years have seen some specific highlights including:

- The Indigenous Justice Strategy
- The expansion of remote hearings via teleconference
- New Criminal Rules
- The adoption of a new name
- The expansion of the Judiciary to meet a growing population
- The development of additional specialized courts
- Judicial complement and Justice of the Peace Report
- Increasing the Civil Claims Limit from \$50,000 to \$100,000 which will take effect on August 31, 2023

The Alberta Court of Justice anticipates continued excellence in the next reporting period.



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