

# District Court Case Management Tools: **2010**

## Concept of Operation (Appendix B)

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### Proposed Approach

This Concept of Operation is the approach to collect and present the case management tools envisioned by the District Court Management Advisory Committee (DCMAC) while making court statistical reporting in Montana more consistent with the Court Statistic Project's State Court Guide to Statistical Reporting.

The document contains four crucial parts.

1. An outline for implementing the tools in seven pilot Judicial Districts.
2. Modifications to the FullCourt case status tables to facilitate the collection and presentation of the case processing measures.
3. The development and implementation of a report utility to allow court staff to review any open cases and set the case status according to the new case status definitions.
4. A proposed dataset for calculating each measure and suggested presentation formats for each measure.

### Requirements and Assumptions

This proposal is based on the following requirements and assumptions.

- The solution must satisfy the detailed tracking of cases defined by the DCMAC to ensure the measures do not include lapses in case processing time for which the judge has no control.
- The solution must comply with the Uniform District Court Case Filing Standards (as modified).
- The solution must be implemented in such a way that tools can be applied consistently statewide with little room for interpretation.
- The solution must provide real time reports for the judge and judicial staff with the ability to drill down to the case level as needed to manage cases.
- The solution must support the presentation of the CourTools case management tools (**Clearance Rates, On Time Case Processing and Age of Active Cases**) with an option to view the tools by case category, case type and case subtype in a variety of presentation formats including statewide, judicial district, court, or judge and the ability to identify cases in which a judge substitution has occurred.

### Implementation Plan

The implementation plan is subject to change based on the needs of individual Judicial Districts and time that may be necessary to make modifications to FullCourt. Information technology staff will establish specific timelines for modifying court data with each District Court Clerk in the pilot Judicial Districts. The target completion date for pilot Judicial Districts is September 30, 2010.

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The following assumptions will drive pilot implementation:

1. Data from January 2006 forward will be used in the calculations of court management tools 2-4. Pre-2006 data was collected in a legacy data management system. Modification of pre-2006 data would take extensive resources currently not available in the OCA or counties.
2. Counties within the following Judicial Districts will work with OCA information technology staff to form the first implementation group: 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. These Judicial Districts contain 18 counties necessitating cooperation from various District Court Clerks. Leadership with the Clerks' Association has pledged to support these efforts.
3. The OCA IT staff will work with the District Court Clerks to convert to the new case statuses (discussed further in the report) for cases filed after January 2006.
4. All District Court Clerks will receive information about the new case statuses and will be asked to begin using the revised case statuses.
5. Changes needed in the Uniform Case Filing Standards will be presented to the District Court Council prior to a request to the Supreme Court to formally adopt the changes.
6. Implementation reports will be presented to DCMAC members monthly starting in July 2010.

## **FullCourt Case Status Table Modifications**

The table on the following page proposes changes to the case status table to support the case processing measures. The table lists the DCMAC case status, the status definition and maps to the FullCourt process case status consistent with the Uniform Case Filing Standard definition for case status.

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## Proposed Case Status Table Values to Implement the Case Management Tools

DCMAC Case Status	Description	FullCourt Case Status Process Uniform Case Filing Definition
<b>Pending</b>	In a civil case other than statutory liens, administrative orders and transcripts of judgment, the case status of pending is used as the initial status for a case in which a complaint has been filed but the summons or court order has not been issued. In a criminal or juvenile case, it is used to denote a case in which the defendant or youth has not formally appeared before the court.	Open
<b>Open</b>	Denotes an active case for the court.	Open
<b>Reopened</b>	Denotes a case previously closed, suspended or on appeal but has since been restored to the court's active pending caseload.	Reopened
<b>Closed/Reclosed</b>	Denotes a case in which an original entry of judgment or dispositive order has been entered.	Closed
<b>Inactive</b>	Denotes a case that has had no activity within the time periods defined in the Uniform Case Filing Standards. Note: A case in an inactive status is considered an open case in calculating age of pending cases and case clearance rate.	Inactive
<b>Suspended</b>  <b>NEW</b>	Denotes a case that has been administratively changed to suspended due to events beyond the court's control, e.g., bankruptcy, absconded criminal defendant, etc. Note: A case in a suspended status is considered a closed case in calculating age of pending cases and case clearance rate.	Open
<b>Set for Review</b>  <b>NEW</b>	A case, following an initial entry of judgment, that is awaiting regularly scheduled reviews involving a hearing before a judicial officer. Note: A case in a set for review status is considered a closed case in calculating age of pending cases and case clearance rate.	Open
<b>On Appeal</b>	Denotes a case that is on appeal from a final judgment. Note: A case on appeal is considered a closed case in calculating age of pending cases and case clearance rate.	Closed

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## Case Status Report

An accurate beginning count of pending cases and case status is necessary to implement the CourTools case management tools envisioned by DCMAC and to further develop consistent statistical reporting in Montana.

The case status report utility would allow court staff to examine all currently open/reopened cases by case type and note if the case status is correct, propose a change in case status according to the new case status definitions, and provide a flag for cases in which the judge may wish to issue an administrative or standing order on why the case should not be dismissed for inactivity.

The final report would be provided to the Clerk of Court who could opt to make the changes manually or coordinate with Court IT staff to make the changes using an automated update process.

## Report Definition

Court	Case Type	Case Year	Case Number	Judge	Current Status	Last Register of Action Date	Last Register Entry Text	Change Case Status?	Change Case Status to:	Court Attention Requested
CourtID	Major case type	Year case was originally filed.	Case Number	Judge Name	Current case status.	Date of last recorded event.	Text of last recorded event.	<Yes or No>	List of values new case statuses	<Yes or No>

## Sample Report

Court	Case Type	Case Year	Case Number	Judge	Current Status	Last Register of Action Date	Last Register Entry Text	Change Case Status?	Change Case Status to:	Court Attention Requested
32	DP	2004	4	Smith	Open	7/15/2005	Inventory and Appraisalment	No		Yes
56	DP	2005	6	Smith	Open	1/15/2009	Annual Report Filed	Yes	Set for Review	No

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## Datasets and Presentation of Court Management Tools

### On-Time Case Processing

**Definition:** The percentage of cases disposed or otherwise resolved within established time frames.

The DCMAC definitions provide the following time reference points for each case category. The time reference point is the goal in days for case resolution.

Case Category	DCMAC Time Reference <i>Days to Disposition</i>
Civil	730
Criminal	270
Juvenile	180
Child Abuse & Neglect	457
Family	270
Probate, Guardianship & Civil Commitment	365
Involuntary Commitment	180

### Methodology:

#### Formula to calculate percentage of On-Time Case Processing in the Montana District Courts

$\% \text{ On-Time} = ((A + B)/C) * 100$ <p>A = Cases closed within the reporting period that do not exceed the time reference points (e.g., 365 days)</p> <p>B = Cases suspended within the reporting period that do not exceed the time reference points</p> <p>C = All cases closed or suspended within the reporting</p> <p><i>On-Time Case Processing</i> is calculated (to one decimal point) and expressed as percentages as follows: (1) a single percentage overall across all case types; and (2) a percentage for each of the case types.</p>
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The following table lists the key data elements (dataset) needed to calculate On-Time Case Processing.

#### On-Time Case Processing Table

Extract for Calculating Case Clearance	Definition
<i>Report Begin Date</i>	Beginning report date
<i>Report End Date</i>	Ending report date

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Court	District Court
Judicial District	Judicial District of Judge
<i>Case Category</i>	See DCMAC Case Classification
CaseYear	Case year
CaseType	Case type
CaseSubtype	Case subtype literal
CaseNumber	Sequential number assigned to case
Judge	Current Judge assigned to the case
ClosedCaseStatus	Closed or Suspended
ClosedCaseStatusDate	Closed or Suspended case status date between report begin date and report end date
PreviousCaseStatus	Previous case status <u>should be</u> Open or Reopened.
PreviousCaseStatusHistoryDate	Corresponding case status history date.
<i>On Time Case Processing Days</i>	On Time Case Processing Days = Closed Status Date – Previous Case Status Date
Substitution Flag	Y or N to indicate a case if a judge substitution occurred at any time in case history.

## Presentation

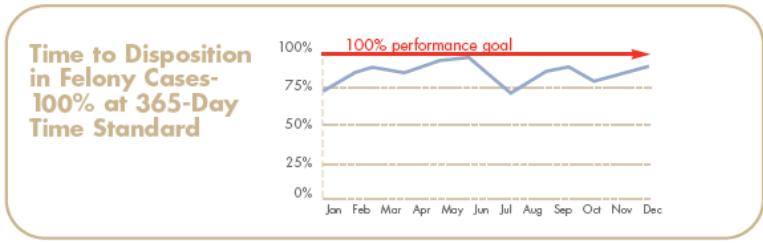
The CourTools case processing documentation includes sample charts for each case processing measure. The following are **examples** of the CourTools charts for On-Time Case Processing.

**CourTools presentation of the on-time case processing measure represented as percentage of cases resolved within 180 days and 365 days with number of days also presented as a mean and median.**

Division	Percentage of Cases Disposed				Number of Days	
	180 days		365 days		Mean	Median
	Current	Goal	Current	Goal		
Criminal	70%	98%	97%	100%	170	121
Civil	82%	na	95%	90%	151	93
Domestic	90%	98%	92%	100%	158	105

**CourTools presentation of the on-time case processing measure with a performance goal of all felony cases disposed within 365 days.**

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**CourTools presentation of the on-time case processing measure comparing case categories and performance goals.**



## Case Clearance

**Definition:** The number of outgoing cases as a percentage of the number of incoming cases. If the clearance rate is less than 100% more cases are being filed than resolved. Inversely, if the clearance rate is greater than 100% more cases are being resolved than filed.

**Methodology:** This tool requires information about the number of incoming and outgoing cases disaggregated by case type during a given period of time.

The overall clearance ratio is calculated by dividing the total number of incoming cases by the number of outgoing cases. To obtain the clearance ratio for individual case types, the number of incoming cases is divided by the number of outgoing cases within each case type category.

*Case clearance* is a close adaptation of the corresponding measure described in the *CourTools*<sup>1</sup> and closely follows the methodology prescribed therein.

### Formula for the Calculation of Case Clearance in the Montana District Courts

$$\% \text{ Clearance} = (A + B + C) / (D + E) * 100$$

A = Cases closed within time period

B = Dispositions of reopened cases within time period

C = Cases placed in suspended status in time period

D = Cases opened within time period

E = Cases reopened within time period

*Case Clearance* is calculated (to one decimal point) and expressed as percentages as follows: (1) a single percentage overall across all case types; and (2) a percentage for each of the case types.

The table on the following page describes the key data elements (dataset) needed to calculate and present the clearance rate measure. These elements would be extracted from the Court Central Repository in a suitable file format for Dashboard reporting through the SharePoint Report Center or ad hoc reports using Excel pivot tables or charts for those so inclined.

<sup>1</sup> A full description of the *CourTools* is available online at [http://www.ncsconline.org/D\\_Research/CourTools/tcmp\\_courttools.htm](http://www.ncsconline.org/D_Research/CourTools/tcmp_courttools.htm).



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Case Clearance Table

Extract for Calculating Case Clearance	Definition
<i>Report Begin Date</i>	Beginning report date
<i>Report End Date</i>	Ending report date
Court	District Court
Judicial District	Judicial District of Judge
<i>CaseCategory</i>	See DCMAC Case Classification
CaseYear	Case year
CaseType	Case type
CaseSubtype	Case subtype literal
CaseNumber	Sequential number assigned to case
Judge	Current Judge assigned to the case
ReportPeriodCaseStatus	Case status (at the end of the reporting period)
ReportPeriodCaseStatusDate	Any date of case status change between report begin date and report end date
<i>CaseClearanceIndicator</i>	<i>In (Incoming) or Out (Outgoing)</i> Incoming = Open, Reopened status set during report period Outgoing = Closed, Suspended, On Appeal status set during report period
Substitution Flag	Y or N to indicate a case if a judge substitution occurred at any time in case history.

The case category and case clearance indicator are programmatically set based on case type (case category) and case status (case clearance indicator) according to the following values.

### Case Category

Civil = DV      Criminal=DC      Juvenile=DJ      Child Abuse & Neglect=DN      Family=DA, DR, DF  
Probate, Guardianship and Civil Commitment=DP, DG      Involuntary Commitment=DI/DD

### Case Clearance Indicator using DCMAC Case Status

Incoming = Open, Reopened  
Outgoing = Closed, Suspended, On Appeal

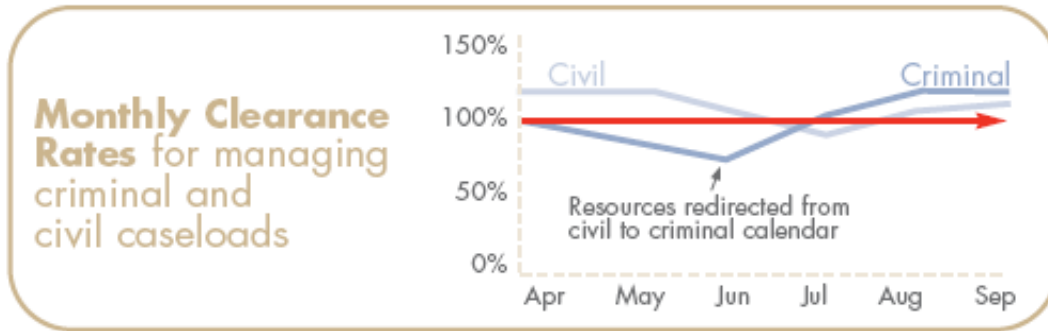
### Presentation

The CourTools case processing documentation includes sample charts for each case processing measure. The following is an **example** of the CourTools charts for case clearance.

### Monthly Presentation for managing caseloads.

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A tabular case clearance chart for managing caseload could also be developed to allow the viewer to drill down to the case level.

Court	Incoming	Outgoing	Clearance
Gallatin	3	6	200%
Missoula	6	3	50%



Selecting incoming cases would link to case level detail.

Court	JD	C_Cat	C_Year	C_Type	C_SubType	C_Num	C_Judge	C_Status	Sub_Flag	Jury Flag
Missoula	4	Civil	2009	DV	Negligence	100	Smith	Open	N	Y
Missoula	4	Civil	2009	DV	Amount Due	101	Jones	Open	Y	Y
Missoula	4	Civil	2009	DV	Debt	102	Smith	Open	N	Y
Missoula	4	Civil	2004	DV	Breach of Contract	11	Jones	Reopened	N	Y
Missoula	4	Civil	2006	DV	Wrongful Death	11	Smith	Reopened	Y	Y
Missoula	4	Civil	2009	DV	Transcript of Judgment	103	Jones	Open	N	N

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## Age of Active Cases

**Definition:** The age of active cases pending before the court, expressed as the percentage of cases that are current; i.e., do not exceed the time reference points.

The DCMAC definitions provide the following time reference points for each case category. The time reference point is the time goal for case resolution.

Case Category	DCMAC Time Reference Point to Disposition (Days)
Civil	730
Criminal	270
Juvenile	180
Child Abuse & Neglect	457
Family	270
Probate, Guardianship & Civil Commitment	365
Involuntary Commitment	180

## Methodology:

Required data elements for this measure include: (1) the number of cases in the inventory of active pending cases; (2) the number of elapsed days each case in the inventory has been pending; and (3) the point of reference for on-time case processing of major case types or categories.

## Formula to calculate age of active cases in the Montana District Courts

$$\% \text{ Current} = ((A + B)/C) \times 100$$

A = Cases in an open status on the measure date that do not exceed the time reference point

B = Cases in a reopened status on the measure date that do not exceed the time reference point

C = All cases in an open and reopen status on the measure date

The age of pending cases by case type or category expressed in terms of the number of elapsed calendar days between the date of filing or start of processing of the case and the current date. This measure is expressed in the formula as the percentage of cases that are current; i.e., do not exceed the time reference points.

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The following table lists the key data elements (dataset) needed to calculate the Age of Active Cases.

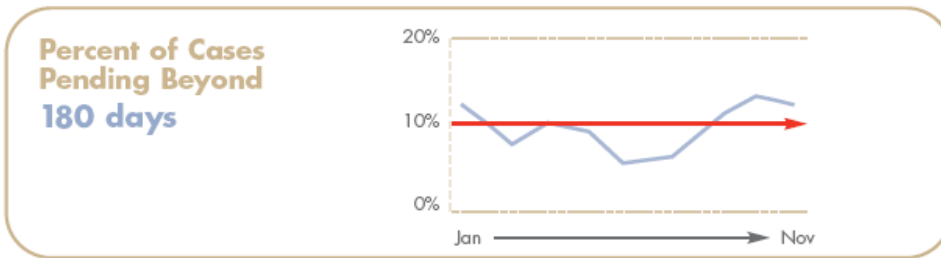
Age of Active Cases Table

Extract for Calculating Age of Active Cases	Definition
<i>Report Date</i>	Snapshot date
Court	District Court
Judicial District	Judicial District of Judge
<i>CaseCategory</i>	See DCMAC Case Classification
CaseYear	Case year
CaseType	Case type
CaseSubtype	Case subtype literal
CaseNumber	Sequential number assigned to case
Judge	Current Judge assigned to the case
ActiveCaseStatus	Current case status = Open, Reopened, Inactive  Note: The age of an Inactive case is calculated from previous open or reopened status date.
ActiveCaseStatusDate	Date case status changed to active case status
Age of Case in Days	Age of each open, reopened or inactive case in days.
Substitution Flag	Y or N to indicate a case if a judge substitution occurred at any time in case history.

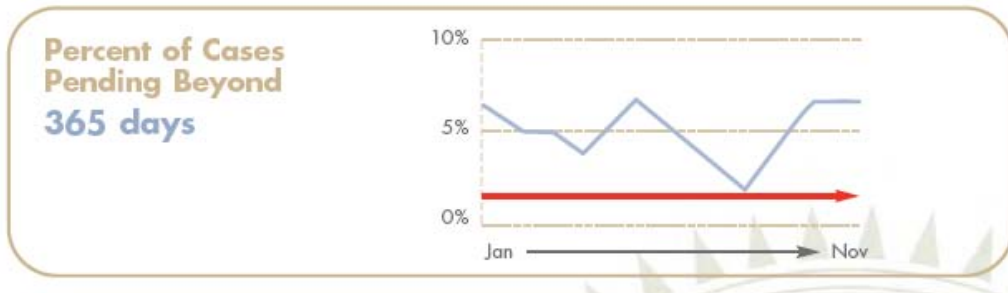
**Presentation**

The CourTools case processing documentation includes sample charts for each case processing measure. The following are **examples** of the CourTools charts for age of pending cases.

**CourTools presentation of the percentage of active cases exceeding a target of 180 days:**



**CourTools presentation of the percentage of active cases older than 365 days:**



**CourTools tabular presentation of active cases older than 365 days:**

**Focusing on the cases that exceed 365 days...**

Case Numbers	Case Type	Age-Days	Next Action	Location	Judge
SC-F-136	Murder	536	Jury Trial	Scott	Jones
SC-F-468	Drug-Sale	382	Motion Hearing	Colton	Smith
SC-F-771	Fraud	439	Bench Trial	Jersey	Kearn

