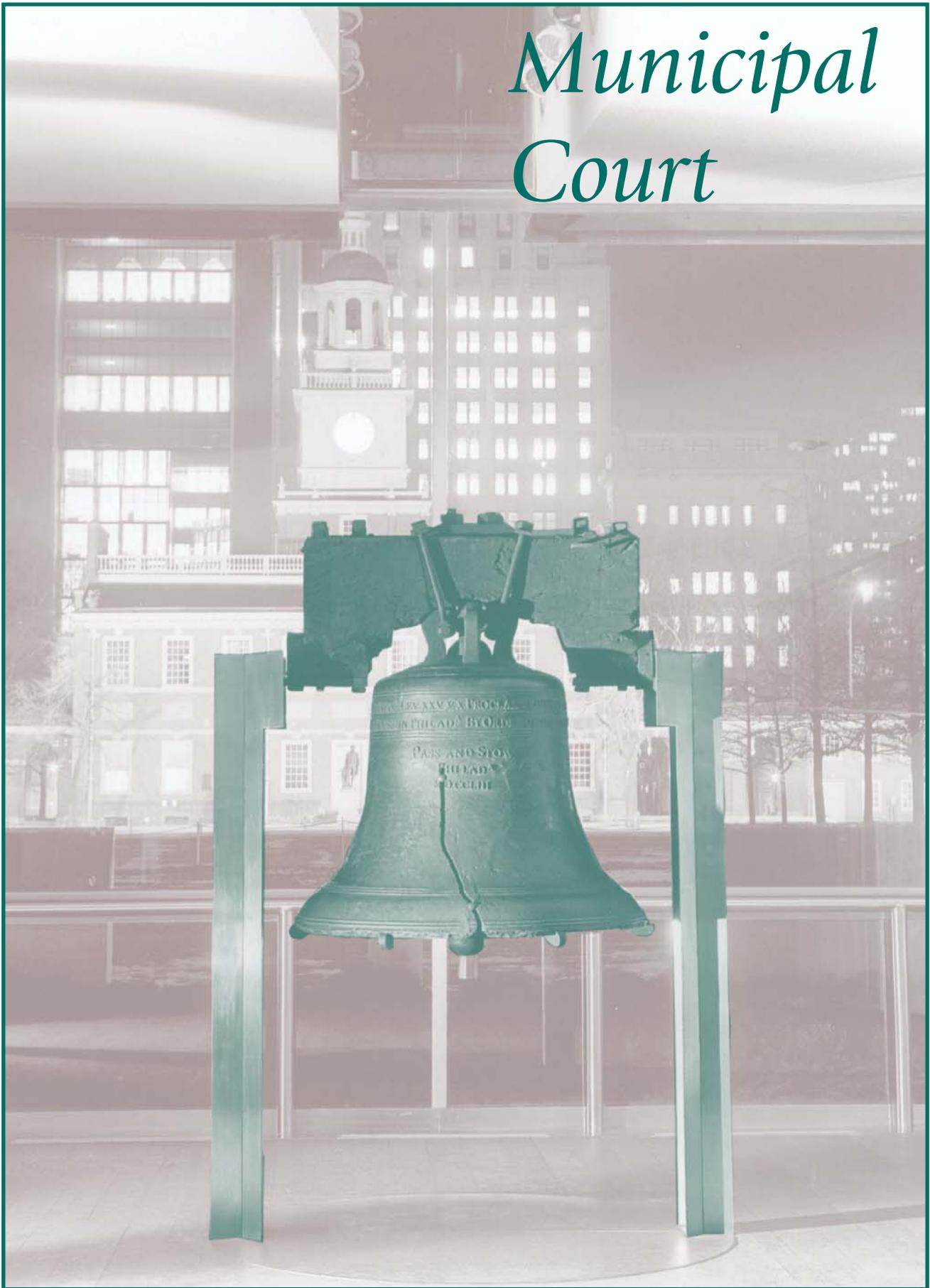


# *Municipal Court*



# Municipal Court

## PURPOSE

The Philadelphia Municipal Court was established through a 1968 amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Municipal Court is a court of limited jurisdiction with 25 judges. Municipal Court processes a high volume of cases yearly, making it the 4th largest Court in the country. There are two divisions of Municipal Court: Criminal and Civil. The Court has jurisdiction over felony preliminary hearings and all criminal offenses (other than summary traffic offenses) which are punishable by a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years. Civil actions are limited to those cases where the amount claimed does not exceed \$10,000. The Philadelphia Municipal Court is the only special court of record in the Commonwealth. By statute, there is no right to a jury trial; however, there exists a right to a *de novo* appeal to the Court of Common Pleas.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The Criminal Division provides service to the public, the Bar, criminal justice agencies and the judiciary. It processes felonies, misdemeanors, summary offenses, and private criminal complaints. The Division is organized into seven sections: Criminal Administration; Arraignment Court (Bail Commissioners); Criminal Listings; Summary Coding; Court Reporters; Private Criminal Complaints; and the Emergency Protection From Abuse Unit.

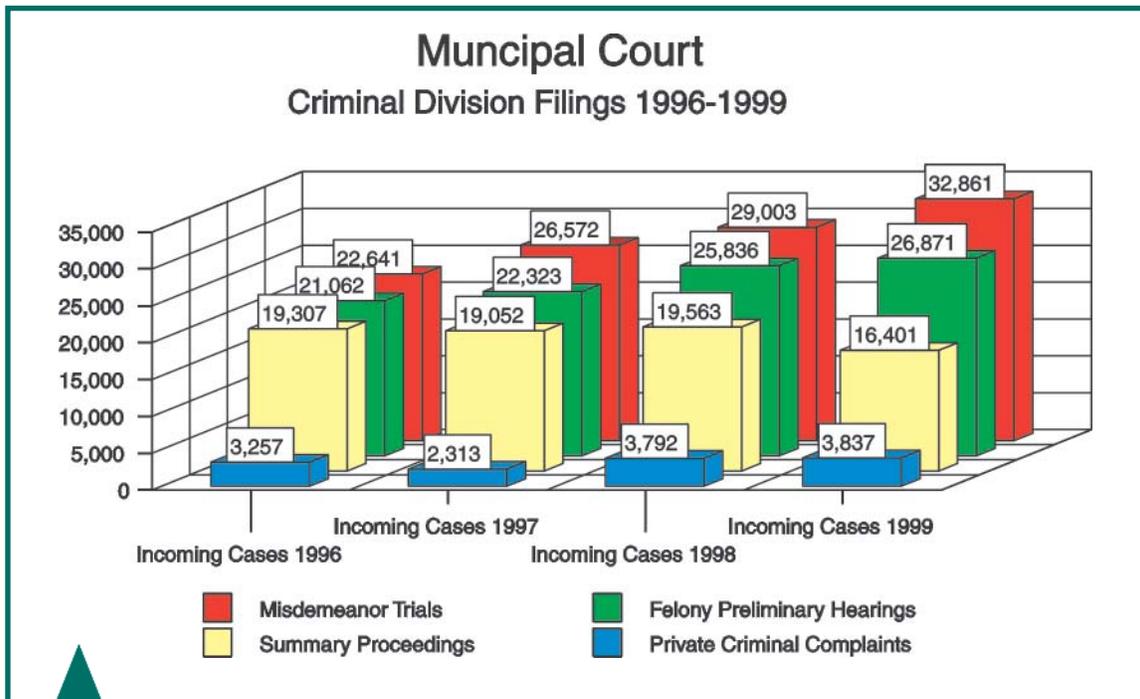
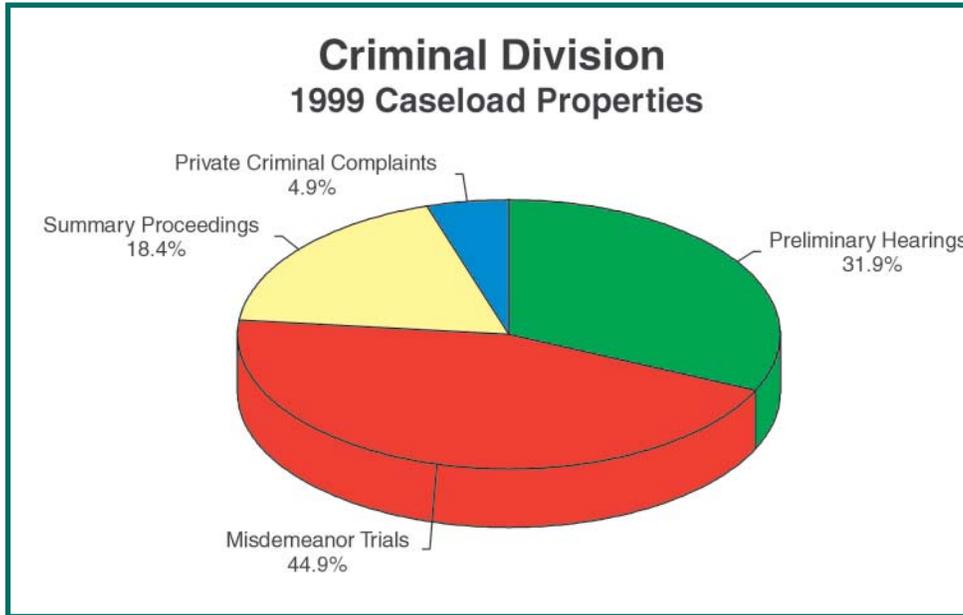
The Civil Division receives and processes Small Claims, Landlord/Tenant, Public Nuisance Complaints, and Code Enforcement filings. The Civil Division organizational structure comprises eight major branches: First Filing Unit; Civil Listings; Data processing; Writ Service; Dispute Resolution Program; Courtroom Operations; Court Recorders; and Judgments and Petitions.

Municipal Court works collaboratively with other Courts in the First Judicial District to provide the highest standard of justice possible to every citizen who interacts with the Court.

## In 1999 ...

- ◆ Y2K contingency plans were undertaken to insure no disruption of criminal proceedings
- ◆ The Emergency Protection From Abuse Unit held its first training seminar for clerks and Masters to deal with legal proceedings and sensitivity issues surrounding petitioners filing for emergency relief.
- ◆ The Pennsylvania Association of Drug Court Professionals was formed.
- ◆ A comprehensive MIS system for Treatment Court networked all participants from the Coordinating Office of Drug and Alcohol Programs, District Attorney, Defender, Coordinator and the Treatment Court Judge.
- ◆ Planning was undertaken to modernize the criminal case management system.
- ◆ Phase I of an automated civil case management system was implemented.
- ◆ A pilot program for E-Filings in the Civil Division was established.
- ◆ Mediation training of third year Widener University law students was completed.
- ◆ All Civil Division employees participated in computer training courses.

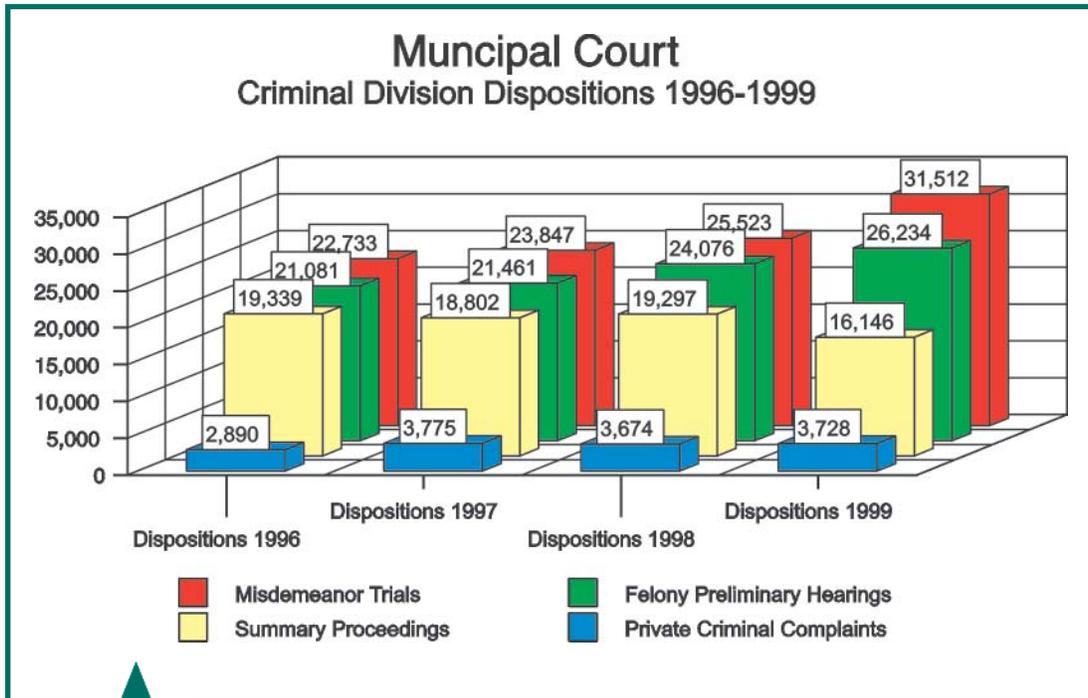
# Municipal Court **CRIMINAL SECTION**



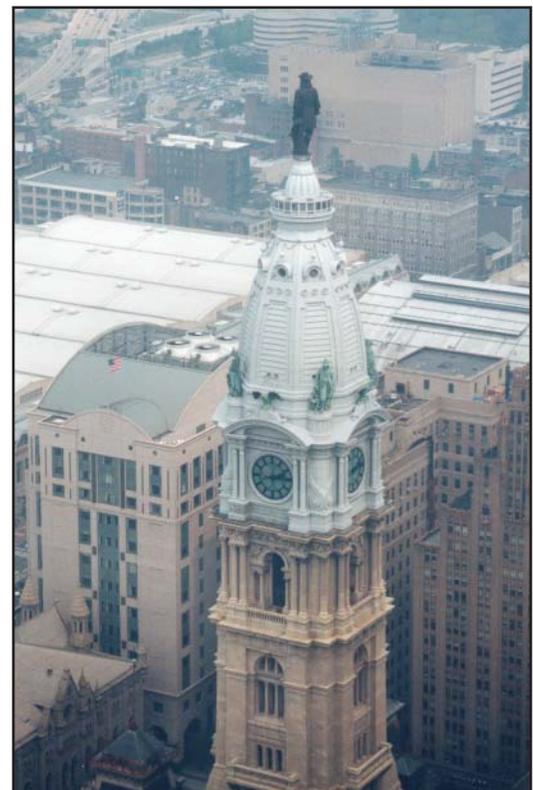
In 1999, there were a total of 79,970 filings in Municipal Court Criminal Division. Since 1996, just under 300,000 filings were received in the Criminal Division. The largest increase has occurred with Misdemeanor trials as a direct result of the Police Department's Operation Sunrise initiative. There were a total of 32,861 misdemeanor trials scheduled in 1999. This represents a 45% increase over base year 1996.

# Municipal Court

CRIMINAL SECTION

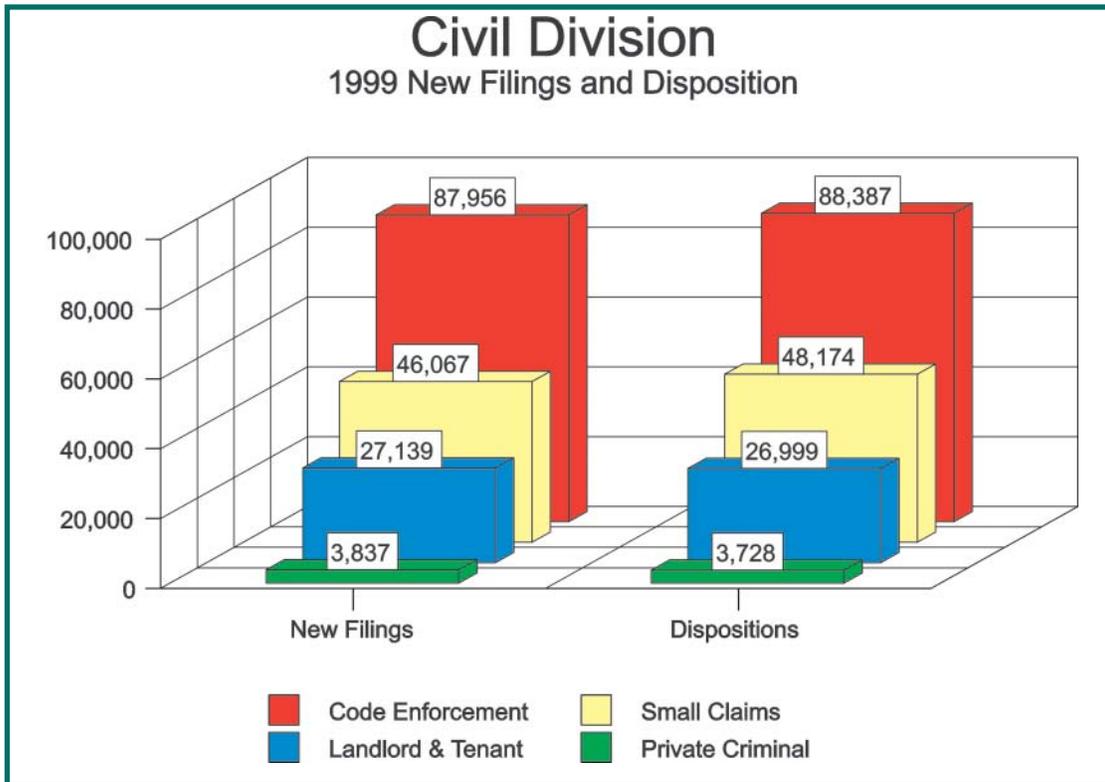
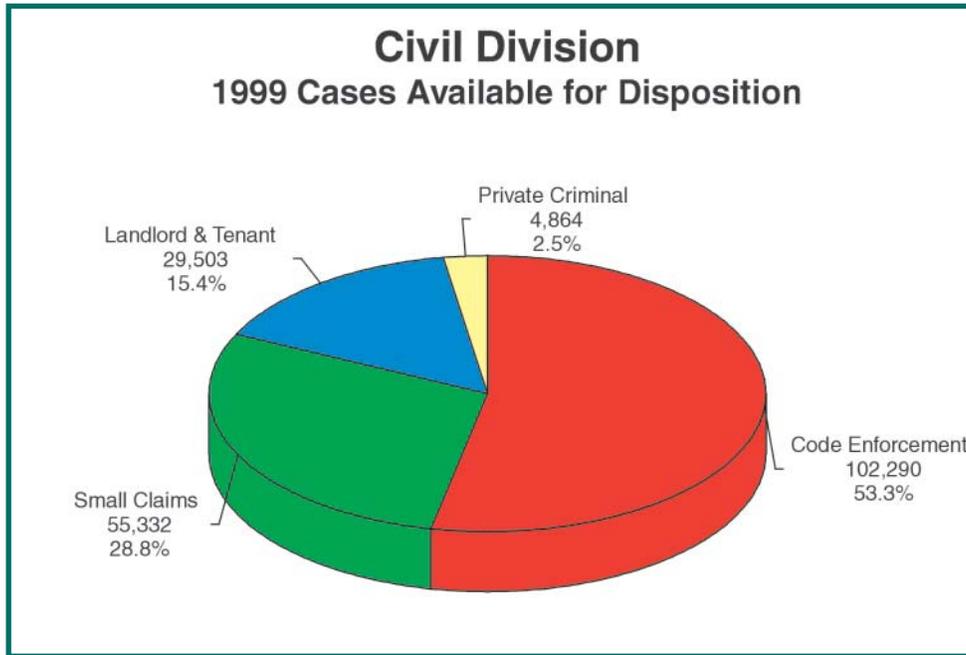


With the exception of summary proceedings, Municipal Court efforts produced substantial increases in dispositions for all case types. From 1996 to 1999, the overall ratio of criminal dispositions to criminal filings is 96.4%. There were a total of 11,577 more dispositions made in 1999 than in 1996. In 1999, the ratio between the number of dispositions and the number of filings was 97%. Increases in the 1999 misdemeanor trial dispositions (23%) outpaced the rise in the number of filings (13%).



City Hall Tower with Criminal Justice Center in the background.

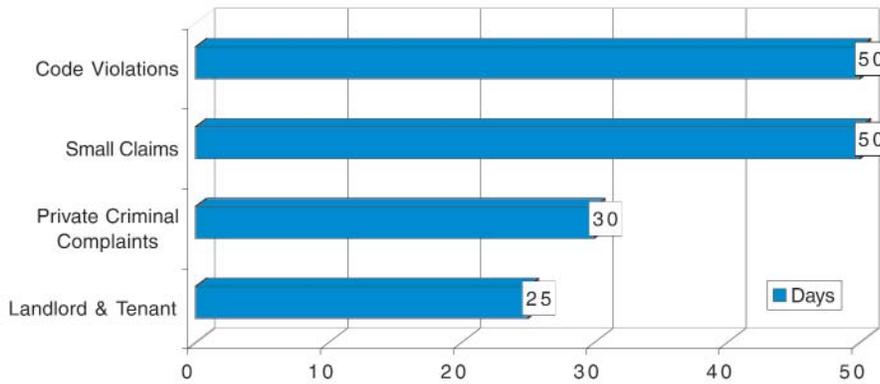
# Municipal Court CIVIL SECTION



# Municipal Court

CIVIL SECTION

**Civil Division**  
**Time From Filing to Date of Disposition**

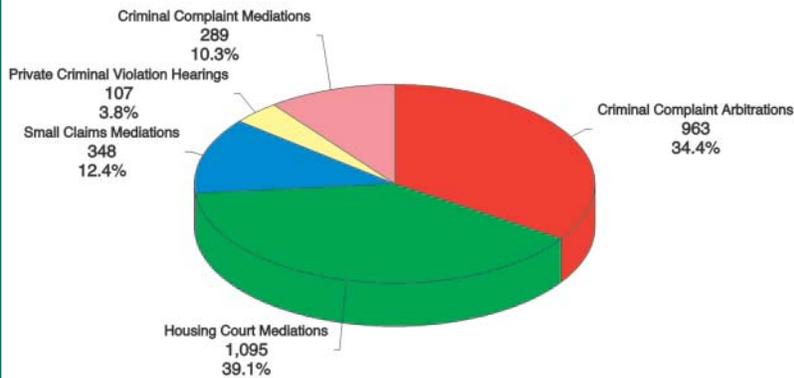


Most MC Civil Court cases are disposed within two months, 18% within 30 days.

The agreement rate for Housing Mediations is 83%. For Small Claim Mediations, 62% of the 314 cases resulted in agreements (parties failed to appear in 31 cases and 3 cases were settled prior to court).

Of the 963 cases forwarded for arbitration, the program successfully handled 930 cases (over 96%).

**Dispute Resolution Program**  
**1999 Total Cases Handled**



**A.D.A. Accommodations**  
**1999**

