Central District of California Annual Report of Caseload Statistics Fiscal Year 2015



Published by the Office of the Clerk of Court for the Central District of California

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Weighted Filings per Judgeship



The number of weighted filings per judgeship for the Central District of California remained high at 659 for fiscal year ¹ ("FY") 2015, down less than one percent from 664 in fiscal year 2014. The national average was 522 weighted filings per judgeship. The Central District of California ranked 12th in the nation and second in the Ninth Circuit for weighted filings in fiscal year 2015.

¹ The fiscal year is the 12-month period ending September 30.

District Caseload Measures

District Caseload Measures									
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% Change (FY15/14)	% Change (FY15/11)		
FILINGS									
Civil	15,257	15,739	14,733	14,567	14,549	-0.1%	-4.6%		
Criminal Cases	1,314	1,347	1,065	823	692	-15.9%	-47.3%		
Total	16,571	17 <i>,</i> 086	15,798	15 <i>,</i> 390	15,241	-1.0%	-8.0%		
TERMINATIONS									
Civil	15,106	15,653	15,232	14,799	14,641	-1.1%	-3.1%		
Criminal Cases	1,417	1,333	1,161	896	726	-19.0%	-48.8%		
Total	16,523	16,986	16,393	15,695	15,367	-2.1%	-7.0%		
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PENDING									
Civil	10,619	10,728	10,240	10,024	9,932	-0.9%	-6.5%		
Criminal Cases	2,081	2,128	2,028	1,935	1,858	-4.0%	-10.7%		
Total	12,700	12,856	12,268	11,959	11,790	-1.4%	-7.2%		

In fiscal year 2015, the Central District of California saw a one percent decrease in combined civil and criminal case filings, from 15,390 cases in 2014 to 15,241 cases filed in 2015. Total case terminations were 15,367, a decline of 2.1 percent from 15,695 in 2014. Pending cases totaled 11,790, a decrease of 1.4 percent from 11,959 in 2014. During the five-year period ending September 30, 2015, total civil and criminal case filings decreased by 8 percent from 16,571 to 15,241; total terminations declined by 7 percent from 16,523 to 15,367; and total pending cases dropped by 7.2 percent from 12,700 to 11,790.

Civil Caseload Measures

Civil Caseload Measures								
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% Change (FY15/14)	% Change (FY15/11)	
FILINGS	15,257	15,739	14,733	14,567	14,549	-0.1%	-4.6%	
TERMINATIONS	15,106	15,653	15,232	14,799	14,641	-1.1%	-3.1%	
PENDING	10,619	10,728	10,240	10,024	9,932	-0.9%	-6.5%	

A total of 14,549 civil cases were filed in fiscal year 2015, a slight decrease of .1 percent from the 14,567 filings in fiscal year 2014. During the five-year period ending September 30, 2015, civil case filings, terminations, and pending civil cases were at their highest in 2012. From 2011 to 2015, civil filings decreased overall by 4.6 percent from 15,257 to 14,549; civil terminations decreased by 3.1 percent from 15,106 to 14,641; and pending civil cases decreased by 6.5 percent from 10,619 to 9,932.



Criminal Caseload Measures

Criminal Caseload Measures									
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% Change (FY15/14)	% Change (FY15/11)		
FILINGS									
Cases	1,314	1,347	1,065	823	692	-15.9%	-47.3%		
Defendants	2,068	2,023	1,652	1,324	1,087	-17.9%	-47.4%		
TERMINATIONS									
Cases	1,417	1,333	1,161	896	726	-19.0%	-48.8%		
Defendants	2,128	2,032	1,881	1,404	1,196	-14.8%	-43.8%		
PENDING									
Cases	2,081	2,128	2,028	1,935	1,858	-4.0%	-10.7%		
Defendants	3,491	3,527	3,231	3,067	2,883	-6.0%	-17.4%		

In fiscal year 2015, criminal case filings in the Central District of California declined 15.9 percent from 823 to 692; filings for criminal defendants dropped 17.9 percent from 1,324 to 1,087. Since fiscal year 2013, the total number of criminal case filings and criminal defendant filings in the Central District of California continued to decline.



Civil Case Filings



Civil rights case filings remained at the highest percentage of all civil case filing categories at 17.5 percent in fiscal year 2015. Fewer social security and intellectual property cases were filed, however there were more personal injury/product liability and real property cases filed compared to the previous fiscal year.

Civil Case Filings					
Civil Rights	2,539				
All Other Civil	2,425				
Prisoner Petitions	2,147				
Contract	1,513				
Intellectual Property	1,392				
Real Property	1,134				
Social Security	995				
Labor Suits	848				
Torts (other than Pers. Inj./Prod. Liab.)	725				
Personal Injury/Product Liability	684				
Forfeiture and Penalty	119				
Antitrust	28				
Total	14,549				

Civil Case Filings by Nature of Suit



Civil Case	Filings by I	Nature of	Suit				
Civil Case Categories	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY15/14	FY15/13		
Social Security	1,109	1,112	995	-10.5%	-10.3%		
Pers. Injury/Product Liability	526	534	684	28.1%	30.0%		
Prisoner Petitions	2,325	2,171	2,147	-1.1%	-7.7%		
Forfeiture and Penalty	94	95	119	25.3%	26.6%		
Real Property	1,414	1,004	1,134	12.9%	-19.8%		
Labor Suits	874	899	848	-5.7%	-3.0%		
Contract	2,121	1,830	1,513	-17.3%	-28.7%		
Torts (other than Pers. Inj./Prod. Liab.)	654	665	725	9.0%	10.9%		
Intellectual Property	1,553	1,484	1,392	-6.2%	-10.4%		
Civil Rights	1,735	2,486	2,539	2.1%	46.3%		
Antitrust	32	15	28	86.7%	-12.5%		
All Other Civil	2,296	2,272	2,425	6.7%	5.6%		
Total	14,733	14,567	14,549	-0.1%	-1.2%		

Civil Removal Filings



Civil removal filings represented 24 percent of the total civil filings in the Central District of California. 70 percent of the total removals were filed in the Western Division; 16 percent were filed in the Eastern Division; and 14 percent were filed in the Southern Division. The largest percentage of civil removal filings were real property (26 percent) and civil rights cases (19 percent).

Non-Prisoner Pro Se Filings



Non-prisoner Pro Se Filings						
Civil Rights	464					
Real Property	761					
Torts (other than PI/PL))	158					
Consumer Credit	102					
Social Security	49					
Contract	76					
Bankruptcy	56					
All Other	365					
Total	2,031					

14 percent (2,031) of the 14,549 total civil cases filed in fiscal year 2015 are non-prisoner cases with at least one pro se party.² Of these, 60 percent are civil rights and real property cases. 7 percent (1,066) of non-prisoner pro se filings have at least one pro se plaintiff. 6.4 percent (935) have at least one pro se defendant, of which 745 are removal cases.

² The number of non-prisoner pro se filings shown is based on data in the Central District of California's Case Management/Electronic Case Filing system and reflects non-prisoner cases filed in fiscal year 2015 that have at least one party with a pro se status entered as of February 18, 2016. This number is subject to change as the pro se statuses can change at any given time.

Criminal Defendant Filings



In light of the overall decline in criminal case filings, total criminal defendant filings dropped 18 percent. The top three major offense categories for criminal defendant filings in fiscal year 2015 were drug offenses (31 percent); property offenses (31 percent); and immigration offenses (13 percent). The number of defendants charged with drug offenses decreased by 23 percent from 437 to 337; the number of criminal defendants charged with property offenses decreased by 15 percent from 398 to 398; and the number of defendants charged with criminal immigration offenses decreased by 29 percent from 197 to 139.

Criminal Defendant Filings by Major Offense							
Major Offense Category	Criminal Defendants						
Drug Offenses	337						
Property Offenses	337						
Immigration Offenses	139						
General Offenses	74						
Regulatory Offenses	56						
Sex Offenses	53						
Firearms and Explosives Offenses	49						
Violent Offenses	25						
Justice System Offenses	17						
Traffic Offenses	0						
Total	1,087						





Criminal Defendant Filings by Major Offense								
Major Offense Category	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	% Change 15/14	% Change 15/13			
Drug Offenses	564	437	337	-22.9%	-40.2%			
Property Offenses	431	398	337	-15.3%	-21.8%			
Immigration Offenses	353	197	139	-29.4%	-60.6%			
General Offenses	75	50	74	48.0%	-1.3%			
Regulatory Offenses	66	55	56	1.8%	-15.2%			
Sex Offenses	56	50	53	6.0%	-5.4%			
Firearms and Explosives Offenses	47	79	49	-38.0%	4.3%			
Violent Offenses	48	42	25	-40.5%	-47.9%			
Justice System Offenses	11	16	17	6.3%	54.5%			
Traffic Offenses	1	0	0	0.0%	-100.0%			
Total	1,652	1,324	1,087	-17.9%	-34.2%			

Civil Case Filings Referred to Magistrate Judges for Report and Recommendation



In fiscal year 2015, 22 percent of the total civil filings were referred to Magistrate Judges for report and recommendations. Of the 3,209 cases referred for report and recommendations, 42.6 percent were habeas corpus petitions; 30.6 percent were social security appeal cases; 18.6 percent were prisoner civil rights cases; approximately 7 percent were non-prisoner pro se civil rights cases; and 1 percent were other cases referred for report and recommendations.

Consents to Magistrate Judges



Parties consented to proceed before Magistrate Judges in a total of 1,154 cases in calendar year 2015, a 5 percent increase from 1,103 cases in 2014. Of this total, all parties consented in 1,055 cases that were referred to a Magistrate Judge for a report and recommendation; all parties consented in 59 cases assigned to Magistrate Judges through the Direct Assignment of Civil Cases to Magistrate Judges Program; and all parties consented to proceed before Magistrate Judges in 40 cases through the Voluntary Consent List of Civil Cases to Magistrate Judges Program.

Magistrate Judge Settlement Statistics

Magistrate Judge Settlement Statistic	S
January - December, 2015	
Number of cases with settlement conferences	
conducted by Magistrate Judges	384
Number of settlement conferences conducted by	
Magistrate Judges	442
Number of cases settled	199
Percent of cases settled	51.8%

In calendar year 2015, Magistrate Judges held 442 settlement conferences in 384 cases. Of these, the Magistrate Judges settled 199 cases, for a 51.8 percent settlement rate. The Magistrate Judges spent a total of 2,359.58 hours, equivalent to 295 days, working on settling these cases.

Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) Statistics January - December, 2015					
Total number of cases ordered to ADR	2604				
Cases referred to Magistrate Judges	366				
Cases referred to the mediation panel	1276				
Cases referred to private mediation	962				
Total number of cases mediated by panel mediators					
Cases settled or partially settled at mediation	350				
Cases that did not settle at mediation	322				
Total number of cases settled before mediation	274				



In calendar year 2015, 2,604 cases were referred to ADR. The Central District of California's Mediation Panel is composed of 226 panel members who collectively possess substantive experience in 24 areas of law. Panel mediators conducted mediation sessions in 672 cases. Of these, 350 cases were resolved or partially resolved, resulting in a settlement rate of 52 percent for cases mediated by the Panel. As of February 2016, twenty-four District Judges in the Central District participate in the Court Directed ADR Program.

The Prisoner Settlement Program provides for the referral of certain prisoner civil rights cases to Magistrate Judge Victor E. Bianchini, recalled Magistrate Judge to the Central and Southern Districts of California, for settlement proceedings at various California state prisons. In 2015, Judge Bianchini mediated 31 cases in the Central District of California and settled 22 cases, a settlement rate of almost 71 percent.

Patent Pilot Program

Patent Pilot Program							% Change
9/19/2011 - 12/31/2015	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total	14/15
Total Number of Patent Cases Filed	110	519	417	298	268	1612	-10.1%
Patent Cases Initially Assigned to Patent Pilot							
Program Judges	18	55	44	47	45	209	-4.3%
Patent Cases Ordered Transferred to the Patent							
Pilot Program by Non-Participating Judges	5	52	81	76	74	288	-2.6%
Patent Cases Transferred to Patent Pilot Program							
Judges as a Result of Related Case Transfer, Self-							
Recusal, Return by Senior Judge, etc.	7	140	115	109	67	438	-38.5%
Total Number of Patent Cases Initially Assigned or Transferred to the Patent Pilot Program	30	247	240	232	186	935	-19.8%
Patent Cases Transferred out of the Patent Pilot							
Program	1	14	10	5	11	41	120.0%
Percentage of Patent Cases Assigned or Transferred to Patent Pilot Program Judges out of							
the Total Number of Patent Cases Filed	27%	48%	58%	78%	69%	58%	-11%

For the majority of calendar year 2015, six judges participated in the Patent Pilot Program in the Central District of California. In 2015, the judges designated to receive patent cases under the Patent Pilot Program received 186 patent cases, of which 45 were initially assigned to them, 74 cases were transferred to the program from non-participating judges, and 67 cases were transferred to the program as a result of related case transfers or other reasons. The number of patent cases filed in calendar year 2015 declined by 10.1 percent, but the number of cases transferred to the program by non-participating judges declined by only 2.6 percent from 2014. The percentage of patent cases filed that were assigned or transferred to patent pilot program judges was 69 percent in 2015. Since the program started in September of 2011, a total of 935 patent cases had been included in the program by the end of 2015.