

## FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT OVERVIEW – JANUARY 2017

The First Judicial District encompasses all of Jefferson and Gilpin Counties. Jefferson County contains twelve incorporated cities. Many communities occupy unincorporated portions of the county as well. Gilpin County has two cities. Jefferson County is the fourth largest county in Colorado, with a population estimated at 565,524, according to 2016 census statistics. Gilpin County's population is approximately 5,828. The district is the fifth largest in the state by caseload volume, trailing the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial Districts. In fiscal year 2016, 47,781 new county court cases and 20,382 new district court cases were filed in the First Judicial District.

There are now thirteen judges and 8.3 magistrates assigned to the district court. Magistrates are judicial non-elected officers who are responsible to the district's Chief Judge. District Court magistrates handle juvenile matters (including juvenile delinquency, dependency and neglect, adoptions, and support) and preliminary domestic relations matters. District court judges handle a mixed caseload of domestic relations, criminal, civil and probate cases. Currently one judge handles all juvenile matters for the District court.

There are now nine full-time judges and .7 magistrates in Jefferson County Court, and a 0.55 judge in Gilpin County Court. The Magistrate handles small claims actions, traffic infractions, emergency probate matters, and some petty offenses. County court judges handle a mixed caseload of traffic, misdemeanor and civil cases. County judges in this jurisdiction also process most felony cases through the preliminary hearing proceedings. In addition to the judges and magistrates, there are 134 clerical and support staff positions in the courts, and an additional 124 personnel in the Probation and Alcohol Evaluation departments.

The First Judicial District is the home of several specialized courts. The Jefferson County Recovery Court, established in 2009, supervises high risk and high need adult probation clients identified as having substance dependency. The offenders are required to complete an intensive 18-month program including substance abuse treatment, probation appointments, drug testing, and weekly court appearances. Incentives are provided to reward compliance and sustained sobriety, and sanctions are imposed by the judge for violations. Upon graduation the clients will have demonstrated continued sobriety, obtained employment and housing and completed 40 hours of restorative justice to give back to the community.

One District Court Magistrate presides over a juvenile mental health court, which is a treatment court established to address juvenile delinquency cases where mental health issues are a cause of the delinquency.

The 1<sup>st</sup> JD also has a family dependency court. FIT (Family Integrated Treatment) Court is a special track of dependency and neglect cases where parents acknowledge their substance abuse problem(s) and are willing to engage in treatment immediately. It is a voluntary family-based program. The Court implements the key principles of drug court as well as sound child welfare practices. This program is a collaborative effort between Judicial and the Jefferson County Division of Children, Youth and Families and involves several community-based organizations as well. Along with sustained sobriety for parents, FIT Court seeks to increase family preservation and reunification rates as well as reduce family re-entry into Child Protection Services. In December, the 1<sup>st</sup> JD FIT Court received one of only two nationwide Prevention and Family Recovery Grants, bringing over \$300,000 over the next three years to our district to be used for improving direct services to children.

The Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee has identified mental health issues of criminal defendants as an area of focus for the First Judicial District. The Judicial District has operated a Veterans Court since April 2014, and an Adult Mental Health Court became operational on October 30, 2015. Veterans Court serves military veterans with substance abuse and/or treatable mental health concerns who are involved in the criminal justice system, while Adult Mental Health Court serves non-veteran defendants with treatable mental health disorders. The primary focus of these courts is to provide individualized services to participants with the goal of treating their chemical dependency and/or mental health issues in order to increase community safety, reduce criminal recidivism, and improve the lives of the individuals. These Courts are also a collaborative effort between many agencies, including the First Judicial District, the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office and Office of the Public Defender, law enforcement, the Veterans Administration, and community-based treatment providers.

Court proceedings are open to the public and observers of court processes are welcome in any magistrate, county or district courtroom. Information on specific scheduling of court dockets may be obtained from the individual court divisions or from the Colorado Court's web page.

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