

**Tennessee General Sessions Data Repository:**

**Output Design**

Final Version

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# Introduction

The purpose of this document is to define the standard outputs of the Tennessee AOC General Sessions Case Data Repository. It is based on interviews of internal and external stakeholders of the repository, and on standard reporting practices of state court systems throughout the nation.

The purposes of the data repository are to: 1) publish information electronically about the work of the courts to support resource allocation and policy determination; 2) measure the efficiency and effectiveness of court business processes; and 3) provide indicators of the success of the courts in meeting their objectives. There are four broad categories of repository information: caseload, caseflow, workload, and outcomes. Some additional elements also must be captured to support known research needs. These terms will be defined and described in the sections that follow.

Reporting specifications will be created to support the collection of this information from the case management systems used in the Tennessee courts. The final specifications likely will not be structured exactly as described in this document. The specifications will balance what is needed against what is available.

Stakeholders expressed interest in knowing about many activities of the courts and the justice system. Most of this information can be provided by the proposed repository, but some stakeholder questions cannot be answered with General Sessions court data, such as pretrial detention time.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Some stakeholders also were interested in operational uses for repository data.[[2]](#footnote-2) These databases are intended to provide statistical information about the work of the judicial branch, and using them for operational purposes is not practical because there may be a significant lag time between events occurring in the court and data about those events being available in the repository. Also, the proposed repository will contain the information required to produce the desired outputs, not everything collected in the CMS. The local courts are the primary sources of this more detailed operational information.

# Caseload Information

## Description

Caseload information is the statistical count of 1) cases coming into the courts (filed), 2) cases resolved by thecourt (disposed), and 3) cases pending in the court for a specified time period (pending). Queries will support each of these three categories, and a report will combine them into a single document, providing pending case information for both the beginning and ending of the time period.

Of particular interest in Tennessee is the involvement of prosecutors and public defenders in court cases. This information, attorney, attorney role, party represented, and role start and end dates should be captured in each case. Court caseload reports will evaluate this information for prosecutors and public defenders, if the proper parameters are selected.

Caseload information should be divisible by a number of factors, as described in the following subsections. At the highest level, all statistical measures should be provided by county, court, and assigned judge. An additional parameter can be used to select only cases in these areas in which a prosecutor, public defender, appointed counsel or pro se was involved.

## Questions answered

### Filing information

* How many cases were filed during a specific time period?
* How many cases were filed during a specific time period in a certain court?
* How many cases were filed during a specific time period in a certain county?
* How many cases were filed during a specific time period that were assigned to a certain judicial officer?
* How many cases were filed during a specific time period in which a prosecutor was involved?
* How many cases were filed during a specific time period in which a public defender was involved?
* How many cases were filed during a specific time period in which appointed counsel was involved?
* How many cases were filed during a specific time period in which pro se was involved?
* How many cases were filed during a specific time period by manner of filing?
* How many cases were filed during a specific time period by type of opening?
* How many cases were filed during a specific time period by charge category?[[3]](#footnote-3)
* How many cases were filed during a specific time period by a specific charge code?
* How many cases were filed during a specific time period by case subtype?

### Pending information

* How many cases were pending on a specific date?
* How many cases were pending on a specific date in a certain court?
* How many cases were pending on a specific date in a certain county?
* How many cases were pending on a specific date that were assigned to a certain judicial officer or involved a prosecutor, public defender, or appointed counsel?
* How many cases were filed during a specific time period in which pro se was involved?
* How many cases were pending on a specific date by charge category?
* How many cases were pending on a specific date by case subtype?

### Disposition information

* How many cases were disposed during a specific time period?
* How many cases were disposed during a specific time period in a certain court?
* How many cases were disposed during a specific time period in a certain county?
* How many cases were disposed during a specific time period that were assigned to a certain judicial officer or involved a prosecutor, public defender, appointed counsel, or pro se?
* How many cases were disposed during a specific time period by type of closing?
* How many cases were disposed during a specific time period by charge category?
* How many cases were disposed during a specific time period by a specific charge code?
* How many cases were disposed during a specific time period by case subtype?

## Input parameters

### Filing information

To obtain this information, the user performing the query must provide the desired start date and end date for the time period requested. The user may optionally specify one or more courts, counties, judges,[[4]](#footnote-4) involvement of a prosecutor, involvement of a public defender, involvement of pro se, involvement of appointed counsel, manner of filing codes, type of opening codes, specific charge codes, specific charge categories, and specific case subtypes. Multiple parameters may be selected. Results will be filtered to match the parameters that are provided, with control breaks and subtotals for each selected parameter.[[5]](#footnote-5)

### Pending information

The user must enter a date on which the cases were pending. The user may optionally select one or more courts, counties, judges, prosecutor, defense counsel, specific charge categories or case subtypes. Multiple parameters may be selected. Results will be filtered to match the provided parameters.

### Disposition information

To obtain this information, the user must provide the desired start date and end date for the time period requested. The user may optionally specify one or more courts, counties, judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, type of closing codes, specific charge codes, charge classes, charge categories, and case subtypes. Results will be filtered to match the parameters that are provided.

## Output display

The output will contain the parameters entered by the user for the request. It also will show the number of cases filed, pending, and disposed that match these parameters. If the user has selected multiple values for any input parameters, a separate number will be given for each, with a subtotal for each parameter. The user will have the option of selecting any number in the output display to drill down to the cases that are represented by that number.

## Drill-down information

The first level of drill-down for caseload information will contain the case number, filing date, party names (first plaintiff and first defendant), case status, court, and county. The second level of drill-down, which is reached by selecting the case number from the first level, will add information for the selected case, including additional parties, charges (categories, class, and codes), manner of filing, type of opening, and type of closing.

## Necessary elements

* Assigned judge name
* Assigned judge end date
* Assigned judge start date
* Attorney
* Attorney party represented
* Attorney role
* Attorney role end date
* Attorney role start date
* Case disposition date
* Case filed in court
* Case filed in county
* Case filing date
* Case manner of filing
* Case number
* Case status
* Case status end date
* Case status start date
* Case subtype
* Case type of opening
* Case type of closing[[6]](#footnote-6)
* Charge category
* Charge class
* Charge code
* Party name

# Caseflow Information

## Description

Caseflow statistics are measures of the amount of time required for courts to process cases. They are usually described as the age of cases at disposition (or time to disposition) and age of pending cases. Both the mean (average) and median (middle) are used in caseflow statistics. The mean is easier to calculate, but the median removes distortions caused by outliers. Both statistics should be provided.

The major difficulty in providing caseflow measures is the need to remove inactive pending status time from the case age. In criminal cases, typical reasons for putting a case on inactive pending status are the issuance of a warrant for failure to appear, 90-day psychiatric evaluation, etc. For civil cases, a case may be place on inactive pending status for a bankruptcy stay, referral to an external arbitration or mediation program, interlocutory appeal, etc. Only time when the case is completely out of the court’s control should be considered to be inactive pending status time. Historically, Tennessee courts have not published caseflow statistics because of their inability to isolate inactive pending status time.

Another limitation of caseflow measurement is that a great deal of significant activity occurs after disposition for a number of case types, and caseflow statistics ignore this effort. Many states rely on workload statistics to measure post-disposition actions.

A final issue is accounting for cases when multiple judges have shared responsibility. Most courts count all pending time for the judge currently assigned, and time to disposition to the judge responsible for the disposition, but the Tennessee AOC may want to explore other options. Judges often object to their numbers being skewed by cases that were not their responsibility.

## Questions answered

As with caseload metrics, the user can select courts, counties, and judicial officers in these queries. These parameters are assumed to be available in the list of questions that follows. Results will be filtered and grouped according to the parameters that are provided.

* What are the mean and median ages in days of cases pending during the reporting period?[[7]](#footnote-7)
* What are the mean and median ages in days of cases disposed during the reporting period?
* What percentage of cases disposed exceed the time standard for each case type?[[8]](#footnote-8)

## Input parameters

The user must supply a start date and an end date for the reporting period. The user may select specific courts, counties, and judges[[9]](#footnote-9). Also, charge category (for criminal and traffic cases) and case subtype (for civil cases) may be entered. Multiple parameters may be selected, and the query will filter, sort, and break (with subtotals and totals) on each parameter.

## Output display

The output will consist of the age of pending cases at the end of the time period, and the age at disposition of all cases disposed in the reporting period for each parameter category. The percentage of cases that exceed the applicable time standards also will be provided for both numbers.

## Drill-down information

The user can select any of the four numbers to display a list of the cases included in the calculation. This display will include the case age, court, county, judge, charge category, case subtype, party names, case status, filing date, and disposition date. The displays will be sorted by case age, with the oldest cases showing at the top of the list, and the newest at the bottom. Selecting the percentage over the standard number will provide a list of only the cases that exceed the standard.

## Necessary elements

* Assigned judge name
* Assigned judge end date
* Assigned judge start date
* Attorney name
* Attorney party represented
* Attorney role
* Attorney role start date
* Attorney role end date
* Case disposition date
* Case filed in court
* Case filed in county
* Case filing date
* Case number
* Case status
* Case subtype
* Charge category
* Charge class
* Party names

# Workload Information

## Description

Workload information includes statistical measures of activities performed by the court during a specific time period. Court hearings are most typically counted, as they show what judges are doing and can be used to compare different locations, e.g., percentage of cases going to trial in urban areas versus rural counties. Other workload measures can include documents filed and orders or other papers issued by the court or clerk. It is not necessary to count every filing type; the AOC may prefer to measure certain activities and ignore others because of the amount of time they require to complete, or differences in how the information is captured from system to system.

There is a database structure issue that sometimes interferes with accurate workload counts. If a court holds a hearing that applies to multiple cases, most clerks enter those hearings into each case. A reporting program will then over-count events. More sophisticated database designs capture one entry for the event and link it to the appropriate cases. It will be important to determine how events are structured in the database for each of the case management systems used in Tennessee counties so adjustments can be made if there are significant differences. This situation usually is less of an issue in limited jurisdiction courts, unless separate cases are filed for each charge on a citation.

## Questions answered

* How many events were held in a certain time period?
* How many documents were filed in a certain time period?
* How many orders were issued in a certain time period?

## Input parameters

As with caseload and caseflow measures, the user must define a reporting period with a start date and end date. Additional optional parameters include court, county, and judge (for hearing workload only). For event workload and for document workload, the user can select one or more codes to filter search results. Separate queries will support these two types of workload queries, and counts of hearings, documents, or orders will be displayed.[[10]](#footnote-10)

## Output display

The output display will list each hearing or document type, followed by the number of those events held or documents filed during the reporting period. The user can click on the number to display a list of cases included in the count.

## Drill-down information

For hearing workload, the drill-down will show case number, party names, court, county, and all hearing dates and types for the case. For document workload, the drill-down will consist of case number, court, county, and all document filing dates and document types for the case.

## Necessary elements

* Attorney
* Attorney party represented
* Attorney role
* Attorney role end date
* Attorney role start date
* Case filed in county
* Case filed in court
* Case number
* Document filing date
* Document type
* Hearing date
* Hearing type
* Party names

# Outcome Information

## Description

Outcome information seeks to describe how cases were resolved in the courts. The types of queries and reports are much different for criminal and civil cases. For criminal cases, the outcome consists of disposition and sentencing information. For civil cases, the dispositions and judgment amounts are important.

Tennessee has some fairly unique and complex requirements to publish judgment amounts for damages awarded for personal injury and wrongful death, along with judicial reductions in the amounts of those judgments. It will be important to clearly identify cases in these categories, when they were filed and disposed, if they went to trial, whether or not damages were awarded, and any additur or remittitur to the judgment by the judge. With this information for each case, all of the mandated statistics can be produced.

Reports of appeals also are needed, along with attorney information – whether or not a prosecutor was assigned to the case, and any involvement of a public defender, appointed counsel or pro se. This is so outcomes can be related to attorney involvement.

## Questions answered

### Civil cases

* What dispositions were entered in civil cases during the reporting period?
* What manner of dispositions was used for each disposition?
* Were monetary damages awarded?
* What was the amount of the judgment?

### Criminal cases

* What dispositions were entered in criminal cases during the reporting period?
* What manner of disposition was used for each disposition?
* What was the disposition?
* How much incarceration time was imposed?
* How much supervision time was imposed?
* How much in total financial obligations was imposed?

## Input parameters

The user must enter a reporting period – start date and end date. The user may select courts, counties, and judicial officers. For civil cases, the user may enter case subtypes. For criminal cases, the user may select charge categories and offense classes. The queries will filter, sort, and break (with subtotals) the returned data according to these parameters. Sentencing information will be included in the reporting period based on the sentencing date, rather than the disposition date. This will allow accurate inclusion of sentence modifications.

## Output display

### Civil cases

The output of the query will show the total number of dispositions for the reporting period broken down by county, court, and judge (as selected). In addition, breakdowns for case subtype and manner of disposition will be included (separately), according to user selections, with the capability to drill down to the underlying cases.

It is also important to combine these factors into more complex queries and reports. It is necessary to combine case subtype and manner of disposition, along with mean and median judgment amount (if applicable), with the selected county, court, and judge parameters. Since this is a very complex output, a sample is shown below. As with all other statistical reports, the user can click on the hyperlink to see the list of cases represented by the number.



### Criminal cases

The output will display the number of dispositions in the reporting period, broken down by each of the selected reporting parameters (county, court, judge, and attorney). The totals for each manner of disposition, disposition, charge class, and charge category will be listed (separately).[[11]](#footnote-11)

More complex queries are needed to compare combinations of these parameters. One of these queries will show disposition and manner of disposition together. A sample is provided below. Other queries will combine offense class and charge category, and possibly other combinations of these four variables.

Sentencing queries will add incarceration and supervision times, as well as financial obligations imposed, with mean and median amounts shown in each category, and for subtotals and total lines. The user will be able to select each number and view the cases that are represented.

Because a defendant may be sentenced on multiple charges, the outcome measures should focus on the most serious charge for which a defendant was sentenced. It is also important to indicate if the defendant fits in a standard offender or multiple offender category.[[12]](#footnote-12) With this information, it will be possible to satisfy all current reporting requirements.



## Drill-down information

Drill-down displays will show court, county, judge, case number, disposition date, manner of disposition, and disposition. For civil cases, case subtype and judgment amount will be included. For criminal cases, offense class, charge category, incarceration time imposed, supervision time imposed, and financial obligations imposed also will be displayed.

## Necessary elements

* Appeal end date
* Appeal result
* Appeal start date
* Appealing party
* Assigned judge name
* Assigned judge start date
* Assigned judge end date
* Attorney name
* Attorney party represented
* Attorney role
* Attorney role start date
* Attorney role end date
* Case disposition
* Case disposition date
* Case filed in county
* Case filed in court
* Case manner of disposition
* Case number
* Case subtype
* Charge category
* Charge class
* Charge code
* Judgment amount
* Judgment amount – judicial adjustments
* Party names
* Sentence financial obligations imposed
* Sentence incarceration imposed
* Sentence supervision imposed
* Sentence units

# Research Data

The previous sections have outlined information required to produce minimal case management statistics. This information should be produced and published regularly. In addition to this core reporting, other requests for information will arise on an ad hoc basis. These requests may result in the creation of a one-time query, or may require ongoing production of new reports. These ad hoc requests usually will require additional data that is not part of routine statistical reporting. While all of the types of new requests cannot be anticipated, it is recommended that other data that is routinely collected in the case management systems of courts around the state also be reported to the repository, to support these ad hoc information needs to the maximum extent possible. Of course, the AOC’s ability to respond to questions will be limited by the information that is available, and the quality of the responses will depend on the accuracy and consistency of the data supplied by the counties. The more information that is collected, the greater the potential for data quality issues.

## Operational and research information:

Based on internal and external stakeholder interviews, it is clear that information about party representation, interpreter needs, indigency, and other resources required to process the case will be needed. For research purposes, information about parties usually is required to sort through complex policy issues. No matter how much information is collected, it will not be feasible to answer all questions, but the following list will highlight areas that can be addressed.

### Party information:

* Party date of birth
* Party defendant type
* Party driver license number
* Party ethnicity
* Party indigent?
* Party race
* Party role in case
* Party sex
* Party social security number
* Party state identification number

### Case information:

* Appeal end date
* Appeal result
* Appeal start date
* Appealing party
* Bond amount
* Bond disposition (forfeited, exonerated, revoked, modified, etc.)
* Bond disposition date
* Bond issue date
* Bond type
* Document filing date
* Document type
* Financial obligations collected
* Financial obligations satisfied date
* Hearing continuance date
* Hearing continuance reason
* Hearing continuance requesting party
* Hearing date
* Hearing trial end date
* Hearing trial start date
* Hearing type
* Case expunction date
* Case sealing date
* Case status
* Case status end date
* Case status start date
* Interpreter used date
* Interpreter language
* Interpreter cost
* Judgment amount
* Judgment amount - judicial adjustments
* Judgment satisfaction date
* Offense-level tracking numbers to connect court information with data in other systems

### Attorney information:

* Attorney
* Attorney party represented
* Attorney public defender recusal date
* Attorney role
* Attorney role start date
* Attorney role end date

# Fee Information

## Description

The focus of this section is to capture all courts civil and criminal fee data for fees assessed and receipted in the Tennessee Court System. Tennessee Statutes authorize the courts to assess various fees. Information about the assessment and receipt of fees during a specific time period must be produced to answer stakeholder’s questions. A user must be able to retrieve this information at the case/fee level. Also, a user must be able to view fees by county, court, charge, agency, etc.

In addition, we have to take into account payment agreements for each fee In order to get an accurate picture of what fees are assessed versus receipted compared to due date of payment agreement.

## Questions answered

* What fee(s) were assessed and/or receipted during a specific time period?
* What fee(s) were assessed and/or receipted during a specific time period in a certain court?
* What fee(s) were assessed and/or receipted during a specific time period in a certain county?
* What fee(s) were assessed and/or receipted per case?
* What fee(s) were assessed and/or receipted per charge?
* What fee(s) were assessed and/or receipted per state agency?
* What fee(s) were assessed, receipted, and includes a payment agreement?
* What is the collection rate by fee type, court, county, or agency?

## Input parameters

The user must enter the desired start date and end date for time period requested. The user may optionally select case types, courts, counties, agencies, and fee types. In addition to those parameters, a user will be able to choose to display aged cases, all cases, and totals. Multiple parameters may be selected. Results will be filtered to match the parameters selected.

## Output display

The output of the query will show the fees, aging and current, for the reporting period broken down by county, court, and agency (as selected).

## Necessary elements

1. Fee/Case Detail

* Case
* Case Detail
* Fee Code
* Fee ID
* Fee Type
* Party ID

1. Fee Distribution

* Assessed Amount
* Disbursed Amount
* Fee Distribution
* Last Assessed Date
* Last Receipt Date
* Payment Amount
* Receipt Amount
* Total Amount Due

1. Payment Agreement

* Agreement Date
* Amount
* Begin Date
* Next Due Date
* Schedule

1. Fee Transaction Distribution
   * Fee Transaction ID
   * Fee Transaction ID Receipt
   * Fee Transaction ID Void
   * Date
   * Number
   * Code
   * Void
   * Forged
   * Fee Transaction Distribution ID
   * Fee Distribution ID
   * Fee Transaction ID
   * Entity ID Paid To
   * Name On Check
   * Assessed Amount
   * Receipt Amount
   * Disbursed Amount
   * Disbursement Due Date
   * Payment Amount

# Data Dictionary

The purpose of this section is to combine the necessary elements for all of the previous sections into a single list, and to provide some rudimentary definitions. These definitions must be expanded, based on how they are used in Tennessee, and how they have been implemented in court case management systems. The list also must be extended to add elements from the case management systems that the AOC decides to include in reporting specifications.

## Appeal information

Counting appeals is important to the courts from both a caseload and workload perspective. It also contributes to understanding the work of prosecutors and public defenders. For each case that is appealed, the following information is needed:

**Appeal start date:** the date on which the notice of appeal is filed in the court.

**Appeal end date:** the date on which the results of the appellate process are received by the court.

**Appeal result:** the outcome of the appeal, whether successful or unsuccessful. This could be expressed in terms of several codes that indicate actions on the trial court decision, e.g., upheld, reversed, or remanded to the court (for new trial or other activity).

**Appealing party:** which party to the original case filed the initial appeal?

## Assigned judge information

Because cases are not always handled by a single judge, it is necessary to track the assignments over the life of cases. If a different judge handles a single hearing for a judge who is not available, that usually does not constitute a change in assignment – unless the hearing is dispositive. The following elements are required to track judicial assignments.

**Assigned judge name:** the name (or bar number or code) for the judge to whom the case is assigned.

**Assigned judge start date:** the date on which the assignment is made.

**Assigned judge end date:** the date on which the assignment ends.

## Attorney information

It is important to track all of the attorneys who are involved in representing parties in cases. Five data elements will accomplish this purpose, allowing changes to attorney assignments. Also, this information should flag cases in which a public defender recusal occurred.

**Attorney name:** the name (or bar number or code) for the attorney designed to represent a party in a case.

**Attorney party represented:** the attorney may represent the state or any plaintiff or defendant in a civil or criminal case.

**Attorney role:** the attorney may serve as prosecutor in a case, or as retained, appointed, pro se or public defender counsel for a party. The same attorney may serve in different roles in different cases.

**Attorney role start date:** the date of appointment, assignment, or entry of appearance of an attorney in a case.

**Attorney role end date:** the date of withdrawal from a case or the date the case was closed.

**Attorney public defender recusal date:** if a public defender’s office recuses itself from representing a party, the date of recusal should be recorded.

## Bond information

Bond information also is of interest to the data repository stakeholders. The following information should be reported about each bond issued.

**Bond amount:** the amount of the bond, regardless of the type. Some bonds will not have an amount associated with them.

**Bond disposition:** the ultimate disposition of the bond, usually forfeited, exonerated, revoked, modified, etc.

**Bond disposition date:** the date on which the bond was disposed. It is not necessary to track the dates on which the bond was continued.

**Bond issue date:** the date on which the bond was issued. This does not require a formal bond setting by the court if a bond schedule is in use.

**Bond type:** bond types vary from state to state, but typical bond types are cash, surety, personal recognizance, property, etc.

## Case information

The court case is the primary focus of data reporting to the AOC, and a great deal of information about each case is required.

**Case disposition:** the disposition of the case. For criminal and traffic cases, the disposition of the charges may be guilty, not guilty, no contest, dismissed, etc. Civil cases may be dismissed, finding for the plaintiff, finding for the defendant, split finding, etc. Cases may have multiple dispositions, e.g., retrial after a successful appeal or change to the disposition following a deferred action by the court.

**Case disposition date:** the date on which the case was disposed. Most cases have only one disposition date, but in some instances there may be multiple disposition dates.

**Case expunction date:** date that the case records were ordered to be expunged by the court.

**Case filed in county:** the county in which the initial charging document, complaint, petition, or other instrument was filed to initiate the case.

**Case filed in court:** the court and court location in which the initial pleading was filed. For the data repository, this will generally be the General Sessions court for a particular county.

**Case filing date:** the date on which the initial pleading was filed, which resulted in the assignment of a case number.

**Case manner of disposition:** there are a number of ways that a case can be disposed (or closed without a disposition), e.g., jury trial, bench trial, plea, bond forfeiture, summary judgment, settlement/agreement, default judgment, dismissal, transferred out, etc.

**Case manner of filing:** in Tennessee, cases can be filed by citation, warrant, summons, indictment, information, complaint, petition, etc.

**Case number:** the number assigned to the case by the clerk. It is typical to add a code for the court location to this number so it will be a unique identifier at the state level.

**Case sealing date:** the date on which case records were ordered sealed by the court.

**Case subtype:** there are many kinds of civil cases that differ significantly from one another. Case subtype is used to distinguish these differences in analyzing the work of courts. The State of Tennessee has a defined list of civil case subtypes that should be used in the data repository.

**Case type of closing:** cases may be closed because they are disposed and all post-judgment activity is complete, or because they are transferred to another court before disposition. Some states close a case that is placed in inactive pending status (and reopen it when it is ready for processing), but this is not the recommended approach.

**Case type of opening:** cases are opened when they are filed, transferred in, returned from inactive pending status, or reopened. Again, it is recommended that cases remain pending when they are in inactive status, but that they be accounted for separately, so as not to skew caseflow statistics.

**Offense-level tracking numbers:** various numbers are used to connect court case information with data in other systems, particularly law enforcement, prosecution, and corrections. The data repository should maintain these numbers to allow broader analysis of justice system activity.

## Case status information

It is important to track the status of a case for many reasons. Most important is the need to separate inactive pending status time from active pending status time for computing case age and related caseflow statistics. Some courts have very sophisticated process models that allow business process performance to be measured and optimized, and case status is a necessary precursor to this level of management.

Since the status will change multiple times during the life of most cases, it is necessary to keep a history of the case status.

**Case status:** the most basic case statuses are active pending, inactive pending, disposed, and closed. At a minimum, these should be tracked in the data repository. Other statuses that are in general use in case management systems in the state also should be recorded.

**Case status end date:** the last date on which the case status was effective.

**Case status start date:** the first date on which the new case status became effective.

## Charge information

While much of the statistical analysis of General Sessions Court criminal and traffic cases will focus on the most serious charge and filing and the most serious charge at disposition, it is important to collect information about all charges in these cases.

**Charge category:** each charge code will belong to a charge category, which is a more general grouping of offenses. For many purposes, it is more practical to analyze cases by charge category than by specific charge, since there may be dozens of codes in each category. If charge categories are consistently applied throughout the state, it should not be necessary to collect this data with case information – it can be maintained in a table in the repository. If there are differences in coding schemes, it likely will be necessary for the courts to report this information.

**Charge class:** the seriousness of an offense, as defined by statute.

**Charge code:** the statutory reference to the offense in the Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA). All courts should be using a standard set of TCA codes.

## Document information

For workload purposes, it is important to report the documents that are filed in cases. These include documents filed by parties, documents generated by the court, and papers issued by the clerk. In addition, returns of service may be filed by the sheriff or other individuals, along with other miscellaneous papers. It is recognized that the AOC may choose to focus on certain key document types for purposes of measuring workload.

**Document filing date:** the date on which the document was file-stamped by the clerk as being filed.

**Document type:** a code indicating the type of document being filed. It is recognized that there likely is a great deal of diversity in how documents are coded in different courts of the state, and some work will be required to standardize these coding schemes so they will be useful.

## Collections information

A common question asked by legislators is how well the court is doing in collecting fines, fees, and costs. Two important pieces of information are necessary to gather for each case. This does not include efforts to enforce civil judgments.

**Financial obligations collected:** total amount collected to date on the case.

**Financial obligations satisfied date:** date on which the financial obligation is deemed to be satisfied.

## Hearing information

From a workload perspective, it is necessary to capture information about court events and the length of trials that are held. From a court management viewpoint, it is important to analyze continuances and their role in case processing time.

**Hearing continuance date:** the date on which the court granted a continuance in the case.

**Hearing continuance reason:** the reason for the request for continuance. Coding continuance reason is a bit of a challenge, but providing a number of standard codes and an ‘other’ code ought to be sufficient.

**Hearing continuance requesting party:** a hearing may be requested by the plaintiff or defendant, it may be a mutual decision, or it may be granted on the court’s initiative.

**Hearing date:** date on which the hearing was held.

**Hearing trial end date:** if the hearing was a trial, the end date should be recorded.

**Hearing trial start date:** if the hearing was a trial, the start date should be recorded.

**Hearing type:** a code that indicates the type of hearing should be entered by the court and reported to the AOC. The AOC should maintain a standard list of hearing codes.

## Interpreter information

Stakeholders asked that information about interpreters be made available. Three data elements are important to answering stakeholder questions.

**Interpreter used date:** the date of service of an interpreter should be collected.

**Interpreter language:** the language used by the interpreter in the hearing, or in translating documents, should be provided.

**Interpreter cost:** the cost of the interpreter for this event should be included. This data may not always be available to court and clerk staff and might better be obtained from the indigent defense payment system.

## Judgment information

When a judgment is entered in a civil action, information about the judgment should be captured and reported to the AOC. Enforcement information will be captured through workload measures.

**Judgment amount:** the amount of the award. It should not include non-monetary awards of property or other items.

**Judgment amount - judicial adjustments:** additur or remittitur to the judgment by the judge.

**Judgment satisfaction date:** date that a satisfaction was filed, indicating that the judgment amount has been paid by the judgment debtor to the judgment creditor.

## Party information

Party information is important to the data repository for several reasons. It will assist users in verifying statistical counts through the drill-down process. It will assist in quality assurance in verifying the accuracy of court reporting. It will aid in matching individuals involved in multiple cases for certain types of analysis. Finally, it will help to satisfy certain statutory reporting requirements for data about criminal defendants.

**Party defendant type:** sentencing reports produced by the AOC must distinguish between standard offenders and multiple offenders. It is necessary to indicate the defendant type on cases where there is a sentence imposed.

**Party indigent:** if a party has been determined to be indigent and qualified for legal representation, this fact must be recorded and reported.

**Party name:** the name of the party is needed to assist in verifying the accuracy of statistical information.

**Party role in case:** the role of a party in the case (plaintiff, defendant, etc.) should be provided.

### Party demographics

Demographic information is captured to aid in identifying individuals. It is analyzed to assist in understanding the individuals who are involved in court proceedings and to determine of policy improvements can be made. This information often is not available in civil cases.

**Party date of birth:** date of birth of the party.

**Party ethnicity:** ethnicity of the party, using Census Bureau coding values.

**Party race:** race of the party, using Census Bureau coding values.

**Party sex:** sex of the party, typically male or female.

### Party identifiers

Party identifiers are used for identification of individuals and to connect cases involving the same parties. Three person identifiers typically are used.

**Party driver license number:** number on the person’s driver license or identification card issued by the state.

**Party state identification number (SID):** number issued by the state criminal history repository in conjunction with an arrest and fingerprinting of a suspect.

**Party social security number:** number issued by the U.S. Social Security Administration to uniquely identify individuals for purposes of operating federal retirement and medical care programs.

## Sentence information

Sentences imposed by judges in criminal and traffic cases must be recorded and reported to the AOC. There may be multiple sentences in a case, most often because of a probation violation, but a successful appeal or other causes might cause this to occur. Three high-level elements are needed to describe the sentence in the data repository.

**Sentence financial obligations imposed:** dollar amount of fines, fees, and costs imposed as a part of a criminal or traffic sentence.

**Sentence incarceration imposed:** length of time defendant is ordered to prison, jail, or similar facility as a part of a sentence.

**Sentence supervision imposed:** length of time defendant is ordered to supervised release as a part of a sentence.

**Sentence units:** an indicator of the units of measurement for incarceration or supervision, either days, months, or years.

**Sentencing date:** date on which the sentence was pronounced by the judge.

1. Local jails are the primary sources for this information. Courts typically do not know (or record) exactly when a person was booked and when they were released on bond. If they do receive that information, it is usually well after the fact. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The only practical way to perform these operational functions would be to implement a centralized, statewide case management system for all of the Tennessee courts, which could cost as much as ten times more than the data repository project. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For purposes of these general caseload, caseflow, and workload reports, the lead charge at filing will be used for the case. Other ad hoc reports will be used to analyze individual charge activity. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. It is recommended that access to judge parameters and judicial information be very limited. Other states have had difficulties with making this information available without adequate explanatory information regarding specific judicial assignments, travel time to other counties, administrative duties, etc. Judges are rightly concerned about being compared to other judges in entirely different circumstances. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Each value of the parameter can be selected—individually or multiple values. The user may select all values displayed individually, or no breakdown of the values for the parameter in the output (the default). This logic applies to input parameters throughout this document. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Some courts move cases off of their caseloads when they go into inactive pending status, while others maintain them in a separate category of active cases. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. For pending cases, the age is usually provided for the last day of the reporting period, but it may be provided for both the starting and ending dates. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. This assumes that the Tennessee judicial branch has or will adopt time standards for case types, or that applicable national time standards will be used. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Throughout this document when judges can be specified, it will be possible for cases to be selected based on prosecutor, public defender, appointed counsel, or pro se involvement. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The count of orders will be a subset of the document count. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Special reports will create the complex breakdowns of sentencing by offense category and class that now are published by the AOC. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. A special report will be developed to include the status of a criminal defendant and judicial adjustments to judgment amounts. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)