



MISSOURI
16TH JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT

2021 Annual Statistical Report

PROBATE RECORDS

New probate case filings in 2021 increased by 14% since 2020. Likewise, they increased by 29% from 2019 to 2021 and 41% over the last five years.

Decedent Estate (full administration) filings for the year increased by nearly 25% when compared with 2020 and about 34% from 2019. Small Estate filings increased by approximately 8% compared with 2020, and 17% compared with 2019.

Petitions to Determine Heirship saw an especially dramatic increase of 62% from 2020. This is not surprising as this procedure is often used to transfer a deceased person's property. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, there were many delays in administration, forcing many people to wait before filing these petitions. Relatives of those who passed away in 2020 would have had to wait until 2021.

Probate	2017	2020	2021	% change (2020-2021)
Filings	4,113	5,059	5,782	+14%
Decedent Estates	473	566	707	+25%
Guardian/Conservator	778	755	826	+9%
Mental Health/Additional Detention/Treatment	171	144	170	+18%
Abbreviated Probate Mat- ters	2,686	3,594	4,079	+13%
Dispositions	3,946	4,779	5,468	+14%
Pending 12/31	7,434	7,855	8,288	+6%

Mental health civil commitment matters continued to increase in 2021. There were 18% more mental health filings compared with 2020 and about 36% compared with 2019. These calculations include the 96-hour detention, evaluation, and treatment and petitions for additional detention and treatment. Given the number of sources that have reported mental health issues during the COVID-19 pandemic, these changes are not surprising. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 42% of U.S. adults (and 40% of those in Missouri) reported symptoms of anxiety or depression in December 2020, compared to 11% in early 2019.*

Adult Guardianship and Conservatorship cases remained fairly stable. Minor guardianship filings for 2021 increased compared to 2020 but were similar in number to 2019 filings. It is possible that there were fewer minor guardianship matters filed in 2020 due to the closure of in-person schooling for that academic year.

*Note: Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7013e2.htm>.

