



# The Judiciary of Guam

Fiscal Year 2017  
A Citizen - Centric Report  
Website: [www.guamcourts.org](http://www.guamcourts.org)



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## Mission

The Judiciary administers justice by interpreting and upholding the laws, resolving disputes in a timely manner and providing accessible, efficient and effective court services.



**The Supreme Court of Guam (L-R)**  
*Justice F. Phillip Carbullido, Chief Justice Katherine A. Maraman and Justice Robert J. Torres.*

## Vision

The Judiciary will provide the highest quality of judicial services, thus enhancing public trust and confidence in Guam's independent and co-equal branch of government and becoming the model of governmental excellence.

## About Us

The Judiciary of Guam is the third branch of the Government of Guam that is charged with interpreting the laws of the U.S. Territory of Guam. The Judiciary is comprised of the Superior Court of Guam and the Supreme Court of Guam of which both the trial and appellate courts provide for the settlement of disputes between parties and protects the rights of individuals as mandated in the Organic Act of Guam and the Constitution of the United States of America. The Judicial Council of Guam is the governing body of the Judiciary of Guam. Pursuant to law, it is composed of all full-time Justices of the Supreme Court, the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, and an appointed Superior Court Judge. The current composition of the Judicial Council was created in 2003, and in 2004, after an amendment to the Organic Act of Guam effectuated by the United States Congress in Public Law 108-378, the judicial branch was declared a separate and co-equal branch of the Government of Guam. Under 48 U.S.C. § 1421-1(b), the Chief Justice of Guam retains all supervisory authority of the judicial branch. With the advice of the Judicial Council, the Chief Justice governs the divisions and offices within the Judiciary of Guam.



**The Superior Court of Guam (L-R)** Family Court Referee Linda L. Ingles, Judge Elyze M. Iriarte, Judge Vernon P. Perez, Judge Michael J. Bordallo, Presiding Judge Alberto C. Lamorena III, Judge Anita A. Sukola, Judge Arthur R. Barcinas, Judge Maria T. Cenzon and Magistrate Judge Benjamin C. Sison, Jr.

## Demographics

As of September 30, 2017, the Superior Court of Guam received 14,412 filings and the Supreme Court of Guam recorded 72 total case filings. The top offenses charged in Guam's trial courts in 2017 were Family Violence, Driving While Under the Influence of Alcohol, Possession of Schedule II Controlled Substance, Assault-Recklessly Cause/Attempt to Cause Bodily Injury and Harassment. Guam's appellate court issued opinions in 13 civil cases, 14 criminal cases and one certified question in 2017.



Guam Law mandates that when there is a permanent vacancy of an associate justice of the Supreme Court or judge of the Superior Court, the Governor of Guam shall appoint a replacement. With input from the Judicial Council of Guam and the Guam Bar Association, the appointment process considers character, reputation in the community, experience in the practice of law, and judicial temperament. A judicial officer appointment shall be confirmed by the Guam Legislature.

# OUR PERFORMANCE



**Filing**= the act of submitting a document to the clerk of a court for the court's immediate consideration and for storage in the court's files.

**Opinion**= A statement that is prepared by a judge or court announcing the decision after a case is tried which includes a summary of the facts, a reading of the applicable law and how it relates to the facts, the rationale supporting the decision, and a judgment.

**What is a trial court?** 7 Guam Code Annotated § 3105 (2005) mandates that the Superior Court of Guam, the island's court of general jurisdiction, are the courts where cases start. In the trial court, both sides present evidence to show their version of what happened in a dispute. They have judges which decide what evidence can and cannot be used and often decide the outcome of the case. The trial court often utilizes a jury or a group of citizens who listen to the facts and make decisions about the case.

**What is an appellate court?** The Organic Act of Guam (48 U.S.C.A. § 1424-1) 7 Guam Code Annotated Chapters 1 through 50 creates a judicial branch of the Government of Guam with the Supreme Court of Guam as the supervisory authority over the trial courts. They focus on questions of law and whether the law was applied accurately in trial court disputes.

## SUPREME COURT TOTAL CASE FILINGS — FIVE-YEAR TREND

CASE TYPE	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Appellate Procedure	0	0	0	0	0
Attorney Discipline	6	6	8	9	16
Certified Question	0	2	1	0	1
Civil Case	39	37	30	23	30
Criminal Case	24	27	40	15	19
Pro Hac Vice	0	2	1	0	0
Promulgation Order	3	2	1	1	1
Writ of Habeas Corpus	0	0	0	0	1
Writ of Mandamus	5	2	2	2	2
Writ of Prohibition	4	0	0	1	2
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>72</b>

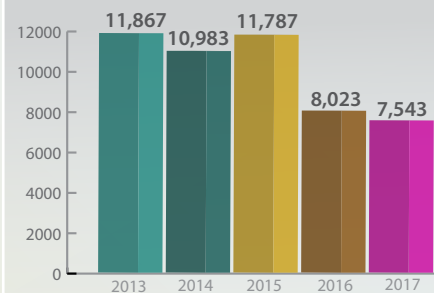
## SUPREME COURT TOTAL OPINIONS ISSUED — FIVE-YEAR TREND

CASE TYPE	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Civil	23	23	23	14	13
Criminal	7	11	17	26	14
Certified Question	0	2	0	1	1
Writ	1	0	0	0	0
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>28</b>

## SUPERIOR COURT TOTAL CASE FILINGS – FIVE YEAR TREND

Cases Filed	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Adoption	43	52	40	39	42
Child Support	312	287	170	356	321
Civil	1,608	1,181	1,182	1,155	1,340
Criminal Felony	710	696	797	768	745
Criminal Misdemeanor	1,083	1,156	996	918	752
Domestic	720	739	657	647	683
Foreign Order	0	1	4	5	1
Juvenile Delinquency	221	217	193	208	286
Juvenile Drug Court	176	146	233	200	0*
Juvenile Proceedings	705	705	609	504	395
Land Registration	7	5	5	3	4
Probate	168	169	208	168	204
Special Proceedings	197	185	187	220	203
Protective Orders	167	131	117	122	135
Restitution (Collection)	40	67	64	59	51
Small Claims	1,932	2,014	1,580	1,662	1,707
Traffic	11,867	10,983	11,787	8,023	7,543
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,956</b>	<b>18,734</b>	<b>18,829</b>	<b>15,057</b>	<b>14,412</b>

## TRAFFIC CITATIONS FILED



Traffic Citations Filed in 2017:  
Northern Court Satellite – 2,121  
Hagåtña Courthouse – 5,422

## TOP FELONIES CHARGED

2017	# offenses
Possession of Schedule II Controlled Substance	217
Terrorizing	105
Special Allegation - Commission of a Felony While on Felony Release	92
Special Allegation - Deadly Weapon Use in Felony	88
Possession and Use of a Deadly Weapon in the Commission of a Felony	80
2016	# offenses
Possession of Schedule II Controlled Substance	253
Criminal Mischief	114
Terrorizing	98
Special Allegation - Deadly Weapon Use in Felony	86
Aggravated Assault - Serious Bodily Injury to another	82
2015	# offenses
Possession of Schedule II Controlled Substance	222
Theft of Property	122
Terrorizing	104
Criminal Mischief	101
Second Degree CSC - contact & victim is less than 14 years old	92

## TOP MISDEMEANORS CHARGED

2017	# offenses
Family Violence	366
Driving While Under the Influence of Alcohol	285
Assault - Recklessly Cause / Attempt to Cause Bodily Injury	182
Harassment	140
Reckless Driving - Without Injuries	110
2016	# offenses
Family Violence	446
Driving While Under the Influence of Alcohol	331
Assault - Recklessly Cause / Attempt to Cause Bodily Injury	181
Public Drunkenness	149
Harassment	143
2015	# offenses
Family Violence	454
Driving While Under the Influence of Alcohol	383
Assault - Recklessly Cause / Attempt to Cause Bodily Injury	232
Harassment	187
Public Drunkenness	165

## TOP OFFENSES CHARGED OVERALL

2017	# offenses
Family Violence	372
Driving While Under the Influence of Alcohol	292
Possession of Schedule II Controlled Substance	217
Assault - Recklessly Cause / Attempt to Cause Bodily Injury	182
Harassment	140
2016	# offenses
Family Violence	457
Driving While Under the Influence of Alcohol	341
Possession of Schedule II Controlled Substance	253
Assault - Recklessly Cause / Attempt to Cause Bodily Injury	181
Public Drunkenness	149
2015	# offenses
Family Violence	472
Driving While Under the Influence of Alcohol	399
Assault - Recklessly Cause / Attempt to Cause Bodily Injury	232
Possession of Schedule II Controlled Substance	222
Harassment	187

# OUR FINANCES

## FY2016 to FY2017 -

### Comparison of General Fund Appropriation Collections

	FY2016	FY2017
Base Operations	30,641,593	31,521,247
Court Appointed Attorneys	1,018,412	1,239,791
Therapeutic Courts	1,383,439	1,383,439
	<b>33,043,444</b>	<b>34,144,477</b>
General Fund Revenue Available for Appropriation	665,042,150	681,271,974
Judiciary Appropriation as a % of GF Revenue Available to Appropriate	4.97%	5.01%

## Judiciary of Guam

### Operations Expenditures by Classification (Audited)

Operations Breakdown	FY 2016	FY2017
Personnel Services	\$20,910,432	\$21,612,865
Benefits	\$7,648,602	\$7,671,840
Travel	\$392,137	\$449,521
Contractual Services	\$1,770,828	\$1,936,782
Supplies & Materials	\$548,880	\$265,908
Equipment - Non Capital Items	\$151,998	\$276,052
Miscellaneous	\$562,102	\$28,644
Utilities	\$846,397	\$973,249
Capital Outlay	\$431,092	\$847,057
Subtotal	<b>\$34,262,468</b>	<b>\$34,061,917</b>

**How 5% of the total Government of Guam Revenue contributes to the greater Guam community?**

### COMBINED STATEMENT OF REVENUE, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2017 (Audited)

Account Name	Operations	Fiduciary Expendable Trust Fund			Capital Projects Fund
	General Fund	Jury Fund	Judicial Client Service Fund	Safe Streets Fund	Judicial Building Fund Fund 30
<b>REVENUES</b>					
Taxes			1,832,235	243,327	1,648,496
Licenses, Fees, and Permits					
Use of Money and Property		1,457			
Intergovernmental	2,379,522				
Fines and forfeits	804,361				
Others					
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>3,183,883</b>	<b>1,457</b>	<b>1,832,235</b>	<b>243,327</b>	<b>1,648,496</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>					
Individual and Collective Rights	34,061,917	563,133	1,364,720	388,940	650,737
Notes Payable					993,005
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>34,061,917</b>	<b>563,133</b>	<b>1,364,720</b>	<b>388,940</b>	<b>1,643,742</b>
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>(30,878,033)</b>	<b>(561,676)</b>	<b>467,515</b>	<b>(145,613)</b>	<b>4,754</b>
<b>OTHER FINANCING SOURCES</b>					
Transfers in	36,849,824	558,712	181,849	145,613	
Transfer Out	4,685,699				
<b>Total Other Financing Sources</b>	<b>32,164,125</b>	<b>558,712</b>	<b>181,849</b>	<b>145,613</b>	
<b>Excess of Revenues &amp; Other Financing Sources Over Expenditures and Other Financing Uses</b>	<b>1,286,091</b>	<b>(2,964)</b>	<b>649,364</b>		<b>4,754</b>
<b>Fund Balance at Beginning of Year</b>	<b>5,730,043</b>	<b>17,017</b>	<b>2,299,437</b>		<b>471,215</b>
<b>Fund Balance – Continuing Appropriation</b>					
<b>FUND EQUITY AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2017</b>	<b>7,016,134</b>	<b>14,053</b>	<b>2,948,801</b>		<b>475,969</b>



## What's Next in 2018

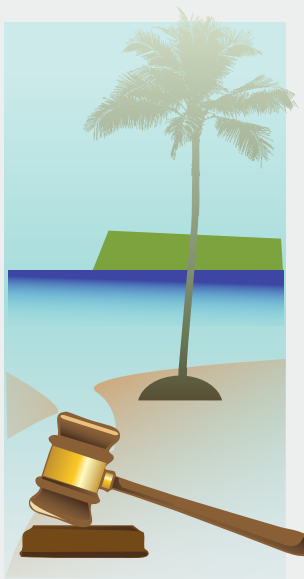
### Implementation of the Safe Streets Act and the Establishment of a DWI Treatment Court

The formulation of this legislation was led by the Attorney General of Guam in collaboration with stakeholders, including the Guam Police Department Highway Division, Public Defender Services Corporation, Alternate Public Defender, Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center, and the Guam Department of Public Works Highway Safety Office. Public Law 34-107 modernizes Guam's DWI laws and adopts a treatment court to enhance public safety, lower costs, improve the quality of life of intransigent DWI offenders, and reduce recidivism in their cases. Participants become eligible after being identified as medium- to high-risk for criminogenic behaviors and high-need alcohol-dependent offenders, who may have co-occurring disorders; are repeat DWI violators or first-time violators with a BAC at 0.15 and higher.



### Legislation to formalize the Criminal Justice Automation Commission

Twenty-five years ago the Superior Court of Guam was asked to construct the Criminal Justice Information System. Thus began an outstanding collaboration between the judicial and executive branches through the Criminal Justice Automation Commission. Adoption of proposed CJAC legislation will further support the Guam Integrated Criminal Justice Information System and develop plans for an inter-operable law enforcement communications system by formalizing the Commission.



### Addition of an Eighth Trial Court Judge

Courts are vital to maintaining the infrastructure of our society. Although not always noticeable, it becomes more apparent in the face of rapidly changing economic and social landscapes. Businesses, government, and individuals need access to fair, quick, and neutral dispute resolution.

There is no doubt that in measuring the modern business climate of Guam, the due-process methods and the timeliness of the disposition of lawsuits plays a significant role in the result.

Furthermore, backlogs drive up local incarceration costs, put the rights of the accused in jeopardy, impact businesses' ability to operate in Guam and Micronesia, and harm families. The Judiciary of Guam is seeking support to fund an eighth judge for the Superior Court of Guam. With the backing of the Guam Chamber of Commerce, our Consular Corps, and other community stakeholders, adding a new judge is necessary today to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of justice.



## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Do you like this report? Is there any other information you would like to see included? Please let us know by contacting Shawn Gumataotao, Director of Policy, Planning & Community Relations at Tel: 300-9282 or email: [sgumataotao@guamcourts.org](mailto:sgumataotao@guamcourts.org)