

Montgomery County Circuit Court Research Bulletin

FY2013 Case Processing Performance - TPR

Case Processing Performance - Overview

Table 1 provides the number of termination of parental rights (TPR) cases that closed between FY2005 and FY2013 (FY05-FY13). The Maryland Judiciary's TPR time standard is that all cases have the final order of guardianship entered (or case dismissed, petition withdrawn, etc.) within 180-days of the filing of the TPR petition. In FY13, Montgomery County Circuit Court closed 27 TPR cases, 10 fewer than FY11 and FY12. Similar to FY11 and FY12, the court closed all but one case within the state-defined 180-day time standard, resulting in a performance level of 96%. The overall average case time (ACT) decreased by 15 days (10%) from 157 days in FY12 to 142 days in FY13. Reductions were also observed in the ACT for those TPR cases closing within and over the 180-day time standard.

Table 1 Number of TPR Case Terminations FY05-FY13

| Fiscal Year | Terminations | | Within-Standard Terminations | | | Over-Standard Terminations | | |
|-------------|--------------|------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|------------|
| | N | ACT* | N | % of Total | ACT* | N | % of Total | ACT* |
| FY05 | 40 | 179 | 24 | 60% | 129 | 16 | 40% | 255 |
| FY06 | 18 | 169 | 10 | 56% | 127 | 8 | 44% | 222 |
| FY07 | 31 | 208 | 13 | 42% | 134 | 18 | 58% | 260 |
| FY08 | 70 | 187 | 43 | 61% | 128 | 27 | 39% | 282 |
| FY09 | 39 | 145 | 37 | 95% | 143 | 2 | 5% | 196 |
| FY10 | 67 | 150 | 55 | 82% | 127 | 12 | 18% | 255 |
| FY11 | 37 | 115 | 36 | 97% | 112 | 1 | 3% | 235 |
| FY12 | 37 | 157 | 36 | 97% | 154 | 1 | 3% | 260 |
| FY13 | 27 | 142 | 26 | 96% | 138 | 1 | 4% | 241 |

Maryland TPR case time standard and goal: 180 days and 100% within-standard terminations

* ACT = average case time (in days)

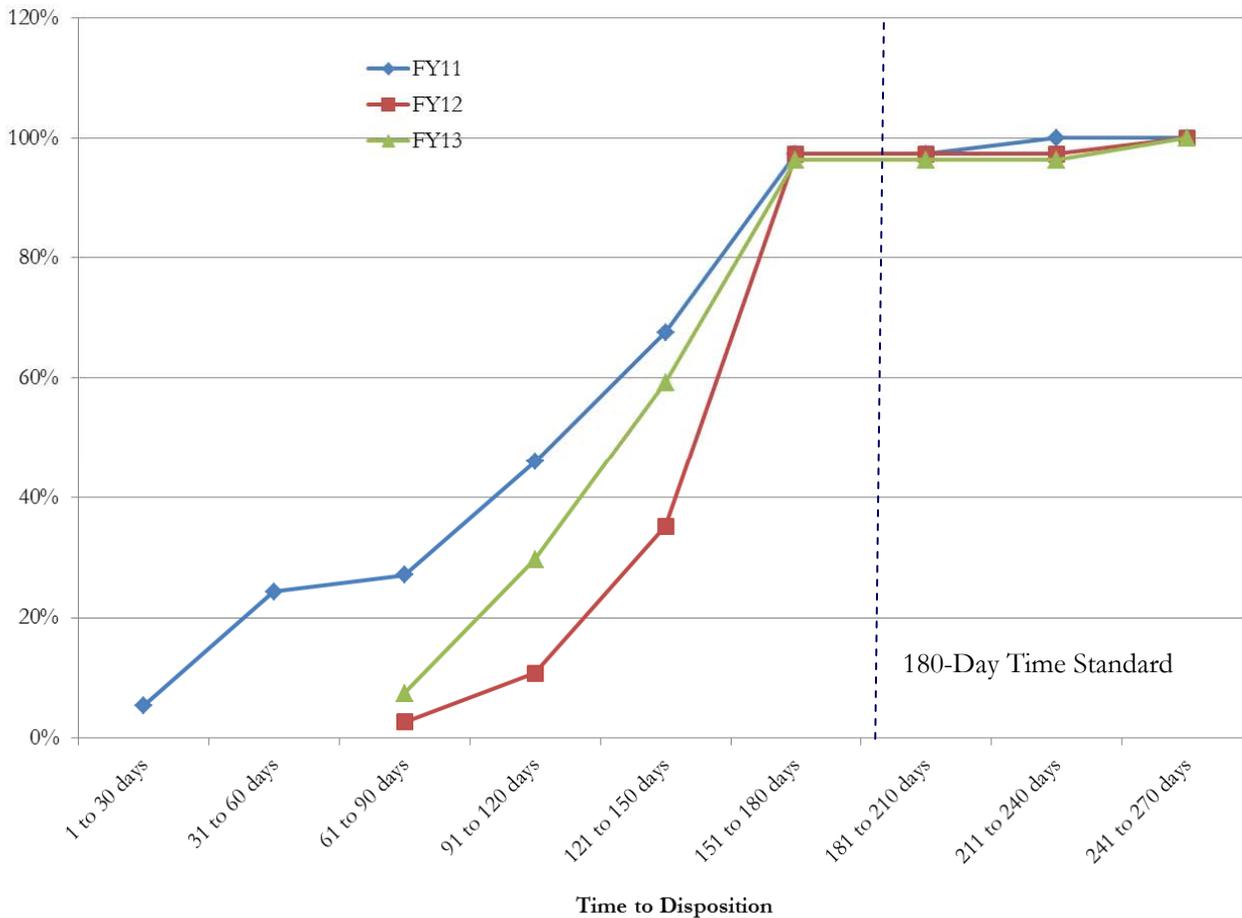
Case Terminations by Trial Postponements

In FY13, 14 of 27 (52%) TPR cases had at least one trial postponement, and all but one postponed case closed within the 180-day time standard. The one postponed TPR case that closed over-standard had an extraordinary cause postponement granted due to the party(s) not receiving notice of the court event or not having been served. Eighty-six percent of the 14 postponed TPR cases in FY13 had a single trial postponement compared to 81% in FY12, 94% in FY11, and 76% in FY10. The most frequently cited reason for postponing a TPR case was 'System-Generated Initial Trial Date Not Conformed to Counsels' Availability' (15 of 16 reasons cited associated with the 14 postponed TPR cases in FY13).

Case Termination Profiles

Figure 1 displays the cumulative percent of TPR cases that closed within defined time categories for FY11 through FY13. In FY11, 27% of TPR cases closed by the 90th day whereas in FY12 and FY13 less than 10% of cases were closed by that point. By the case time standard of 180 days, the termination profiles converged whereby 96-97% of all cases reached the defined case closure event. Even though FY12 and FY13 TPR cases reached closure later in the case process, the majority of these cases had processing times that did not exceed the 180-day time standard (similar to FY11).

Figure 1 TPR Termination Profiles, FY11 through FY13



Next Steps

- ◆ Convene a meeting with the Family Division Services Coordinator, Supervising Juvenile Case Manager, the Clerk's Juvenile Department Manager, and the Permanency Planning Liaison to discuss additional analyses that can be used to inform TPR case processing or any other management questions of interest.
- ◆ Preliminary analyses revealed that the percentage of cases closed within certain time periods differs between FY11 and FY12/FY13 terminations. The court should perform additional analyses of the average time to serve parties in cases closed in FY11 compared to FY12 and FY13 as service is one possible reason for delay in the case process.