

Calendar Management: 'To Be Assigned' Cases

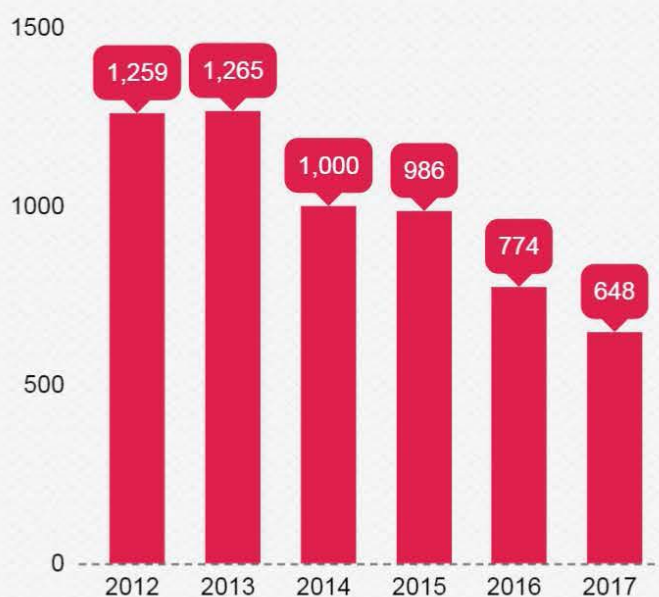
Fiscal Year 2017

Montgomery County Circuit Court maintains a "To Be Assigned" (TBA) docket because the number of cases requiring a hearing or trial exceeds the calendar space for the available judges and magistrates. Cases placed on the TBA docket are limited to certain civil and family events as identified by the court's Assignment Office. It is important that cases placed on the TBA docket are reached in a timely manner. An uncontrolled TBA docket may result in additional costs and delay for parties. Montgomery County Circuit Court closely monitors and manages its TBA docket.

A TBA case is considered "reached" when it is assigned to a judicial officer, and the scheduled event is held or is postponed by a single party or jointly. The case may also be considered reached when it has been removed from the TBA docket prior to or on the scheduled date because the event was disposed for a reason other than the court's inability to hear the proceeding.

Trend in TBA Cases

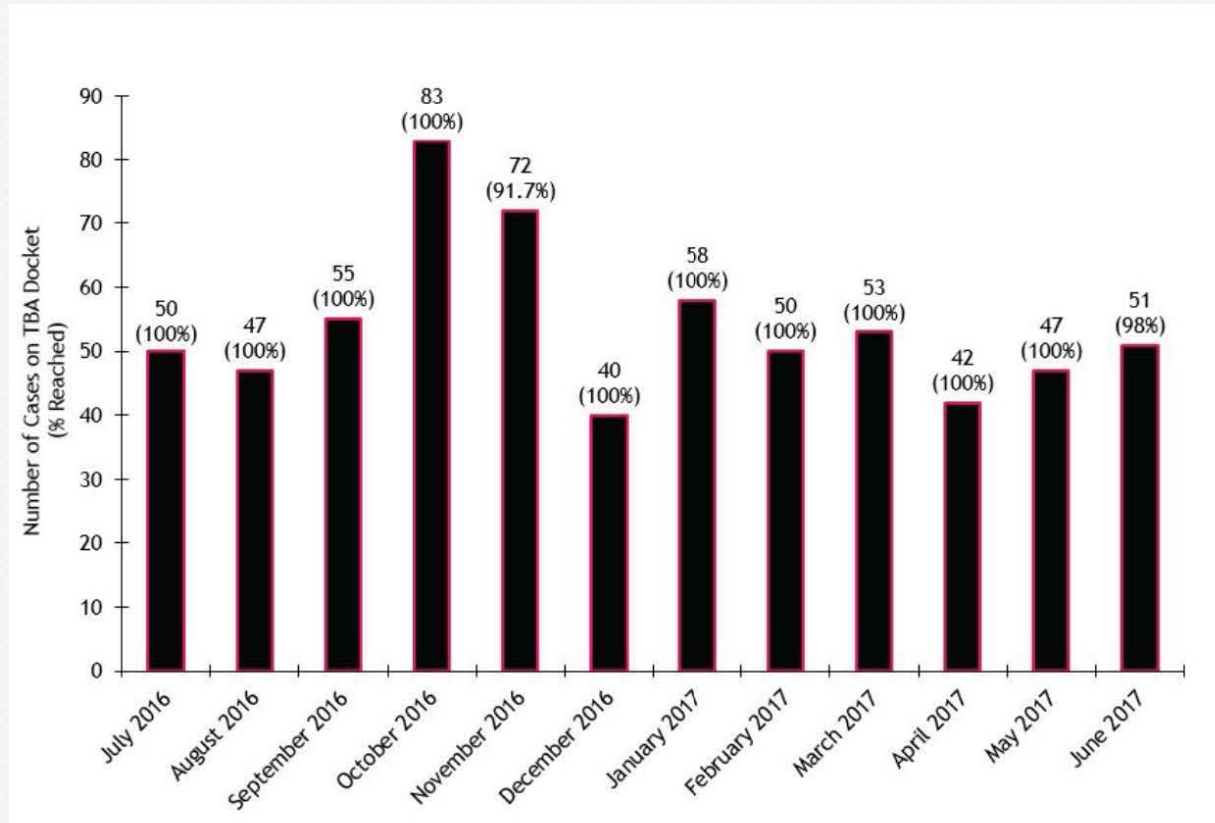
The number of TBA cases has declined by almost 50% between 2013 and 2017 from 1,265 to 648 cases. More recently, the decline was less dramatic at 16% between 2016 (774) and 2017. The average number of TBA cases per month decreased to 54 cases in 2017 from 65 cases in 2016 and 105 cases in 2013. The majority of TBA cases are reached by the court. Declines in case filings and additional judicial positions are possible factors for the observed declines in the court's TBA caseload.



Fiscal Year	TBA Cases	Monthly Average	TBA Cases Reached	% Reached
2012	1,259	104.9	1,231	97.8%
2013	1,265	105.4	1,236	97.7%
2014	1,000	83.3	980	98.0%
2015	986	82.2	965	97.9%
2016	774	64.5	755	97.5%
2017	648	54.0	641	98.9%
2012-2017	5,932	82.4	5,808	97.9%

2017 - TBA In Detail

The number of TBA cases ranges widely from one month to another with the minimum of 40 cases in December 2016 and the maximum of 83 in October 2016. Monthly percentages of reached TBA cases ranges from 92% (November 2016) to 100% (in all other months except June 2017, which reached 98%). From the perspective of daily counts of TBA cases and the percentage reached, both are 2.5 cases per day. This finding indicates that the court was able to reach nearly all TBA cases on the same day when they were placed on the TBA docket.



Conclusions

As a result of improved collection, tracking, and reporting of TBA information, the court is able to analyze its processing of TBA cases and their outcomes more accurately as well as communicate and use the information to guide scheduling practices. The court continues to monitor the number of TBA cases and their associated outcomes in relation to the number of judges and magistrates available and the Assignment Office's calendaring practices. In order to ensure efficient scheduling practices, it is important that parties promptly notify the Assignment Office about any cancelations in scheduled events and provide accurate trial time estimates. Requests for interpreters and ADA accommodations, as well as information about the number of out-of-state or out-of-country parties or witnesses should also be provided to the court at status/pre-trial and settlement/pre-trial hearings as this type of information is essential for the court to prepare its dockets. Through close examination of its own practices and with the assistance and cooperation from its patrons, the court will be able to succeed in its mission of administering justice in an efficient and just manner.

SOURCE

Data for this analysis was obtained from information collected on the court's TBA Docket contained in its case management system. For questions regarding the analysis, please contact court research personnel at 240.777.9387 or 240.777.9388.