Judicial Department Presentation to the DU Strategic Issues Panel on the Future of State Government

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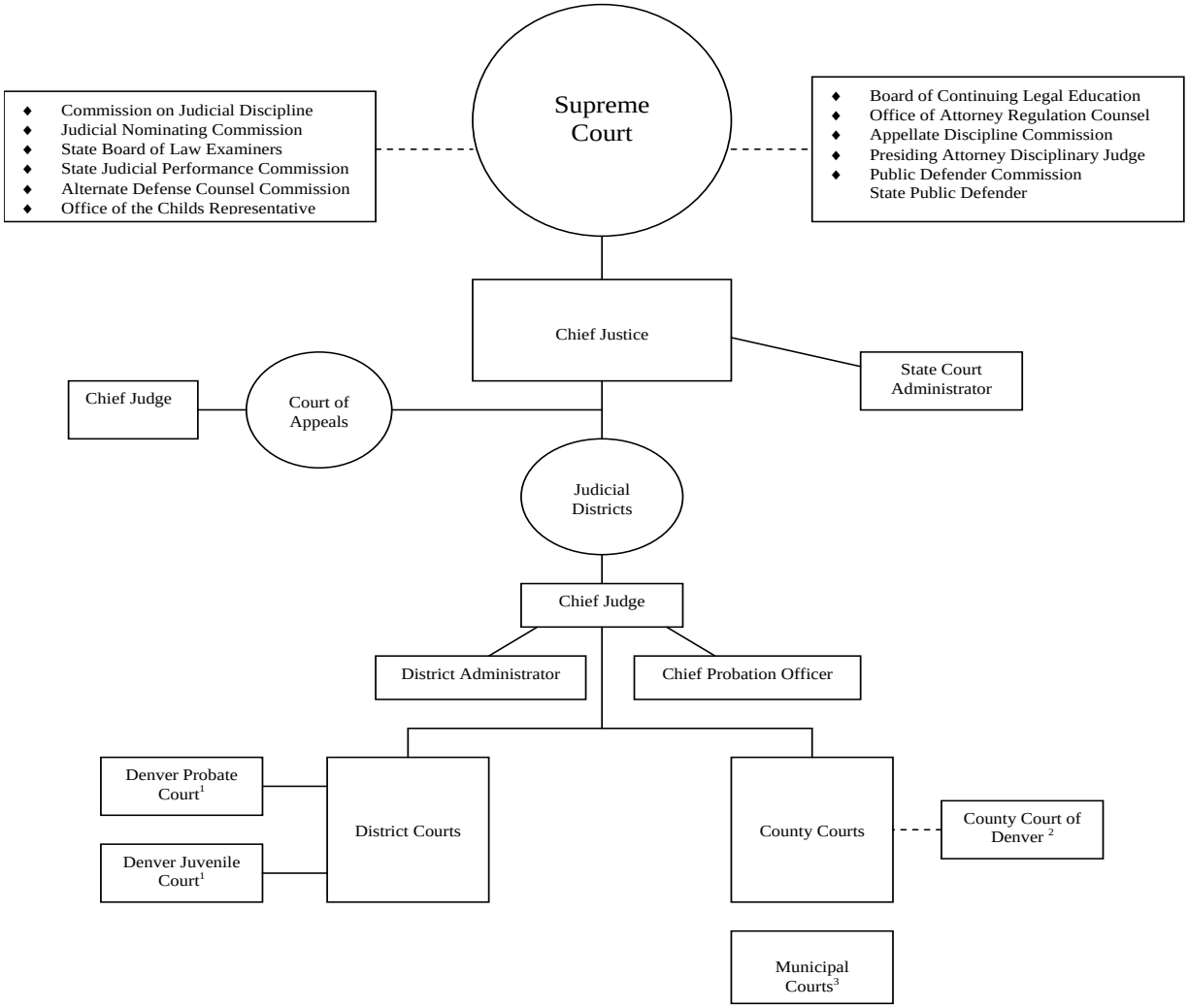
Organization Chart of the Judicial Branch

The Colorado court system consists of the Supreme Court, an intermediate Court of Appeals, district courts and county courts. Each county has both a district court and a county court. Special probate and juvenile courts created by the Colorado Constitution exist in the City and County of Denver. Colorado statutes also authorize locally funded municipal courts with jurisdiction limited to municipal ordinance violations.



1 - Exclusive to the City and County of Denver. In the rest of the state, the district court is responsible for juvenile and probate matters.

2 – The Denver County Court functions as a municipal as well as a county court and is separate from the state court system.

3 –- Created and maintained by local government but subject to Supreme Court rules and procedures.

Branch Overview

- Third Branch of Government
- Responsible for the appellate, district, and county courts along with probation in Colorado
- 128 locations in all 64 Counties (22 Districts)
- Court FTE (Trial and Appellate): 1,890
- Probation FTE: 1,132

Branch Overview

- Caseload Driven—by constitutional and statutory requirements
- 311 judges handle over ¾ million new cases filed per year
- Approximately 90,000 offenders on probation in Colorado

County Court

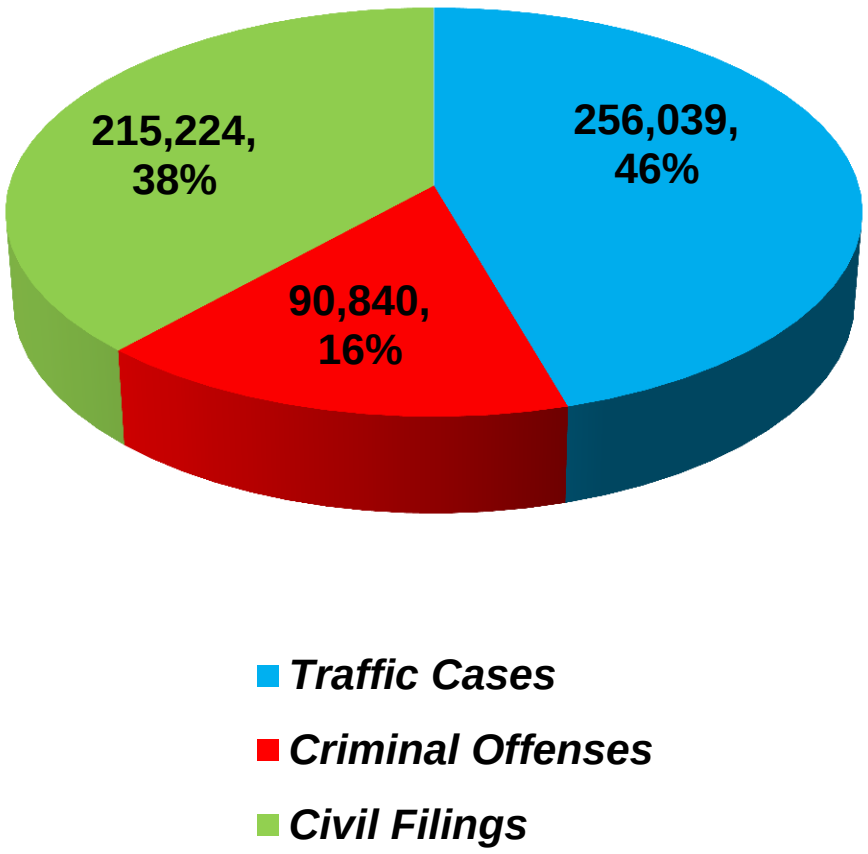
Over 500,000 new County Court cases are filed per year in Colorado. These cases include:

• Traffic matters—ranging from low level infractions up to DUI cases

•Criminal offenses—lower level assault, drug, and domestic violence cases

•Civil matters—primarily businesses collecting unpaid debts less than $15,000, restraining orders, and evictions

New County Court Case Filings: FY 2009



District Court

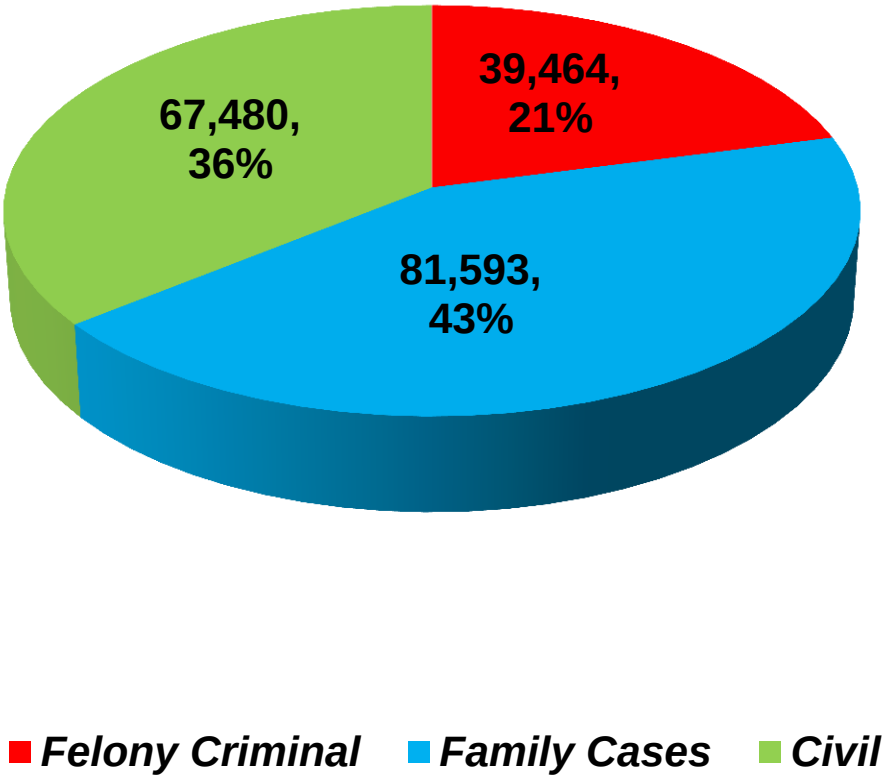
Nearly 200,000 new District Court cases are filed per year in Colorado. These cases include:

• Felony Criminal offenses—the most serious crimes including sex assault, burglary, kidnapping, higher level drug offenses and murder

•Civil matters—primarily resolution of business disputes and foreclosures

•Family cases—divorces, adoptions, child neglect, guardianships for at-risk adults and children, and protection of the mentally ill

New District Court Case Filings: FY 2009



Probation

Approximately 90,000 offenders are actively supervised on probation in Colorado.

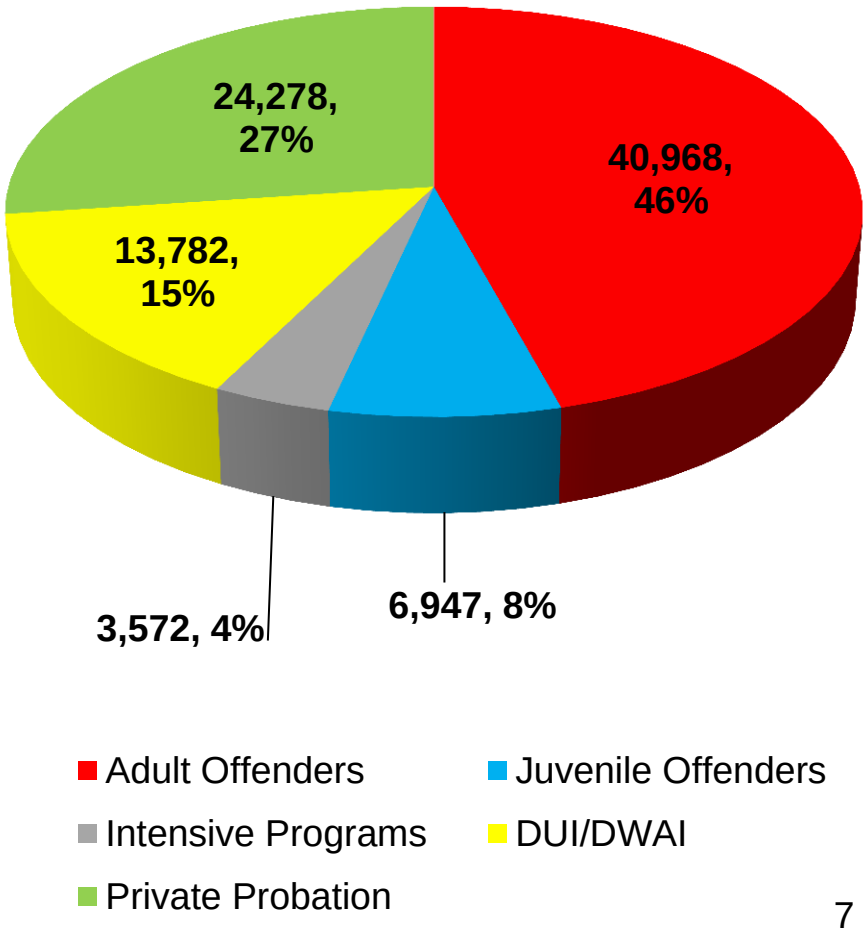
•Efficient use of resources: offenders supervised based on assessed risk to the community

•Critical information to the courts: presentence reports for over 45,000 offenders per year

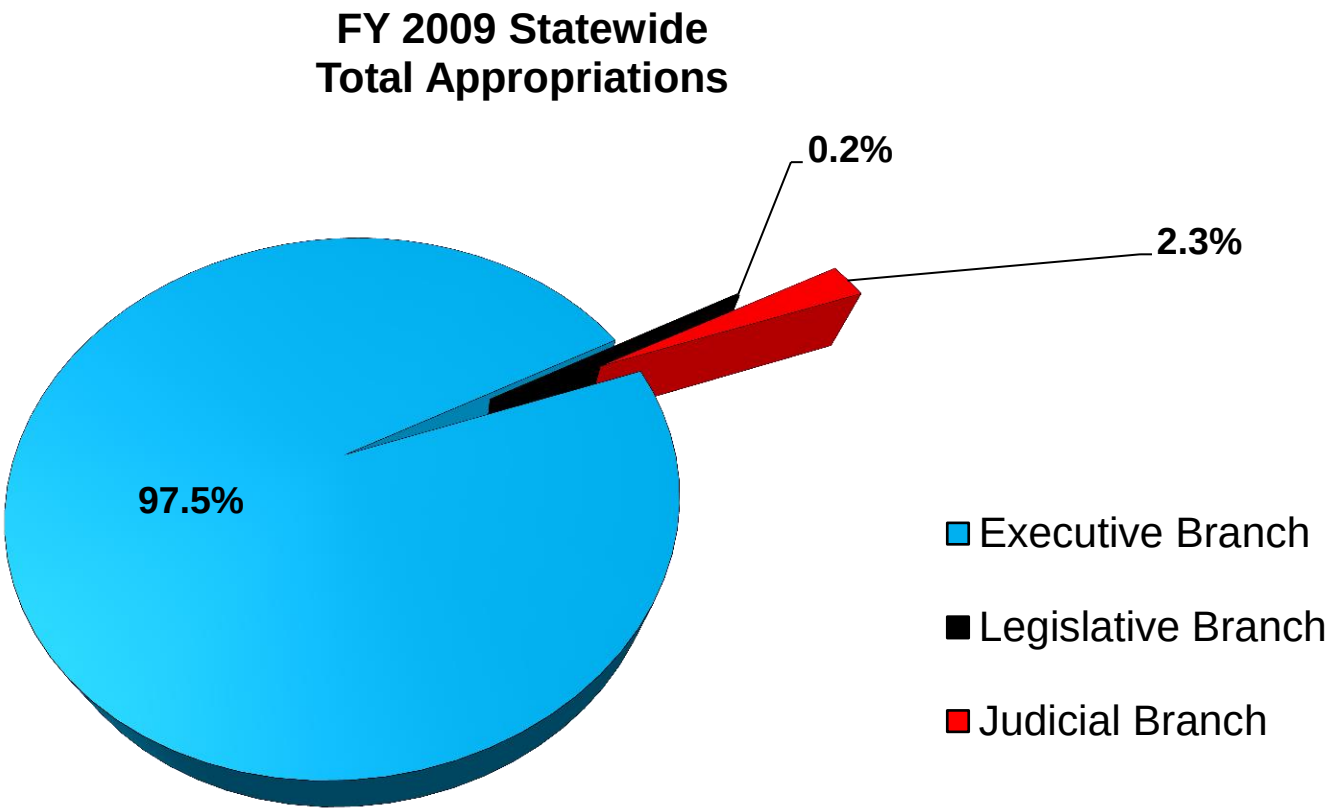
•Focused on what works: active use of evidence based practices

•Committed to the community: post-sentencing services for victims

Active Probation Caseload: FY 2009



Budget Overview

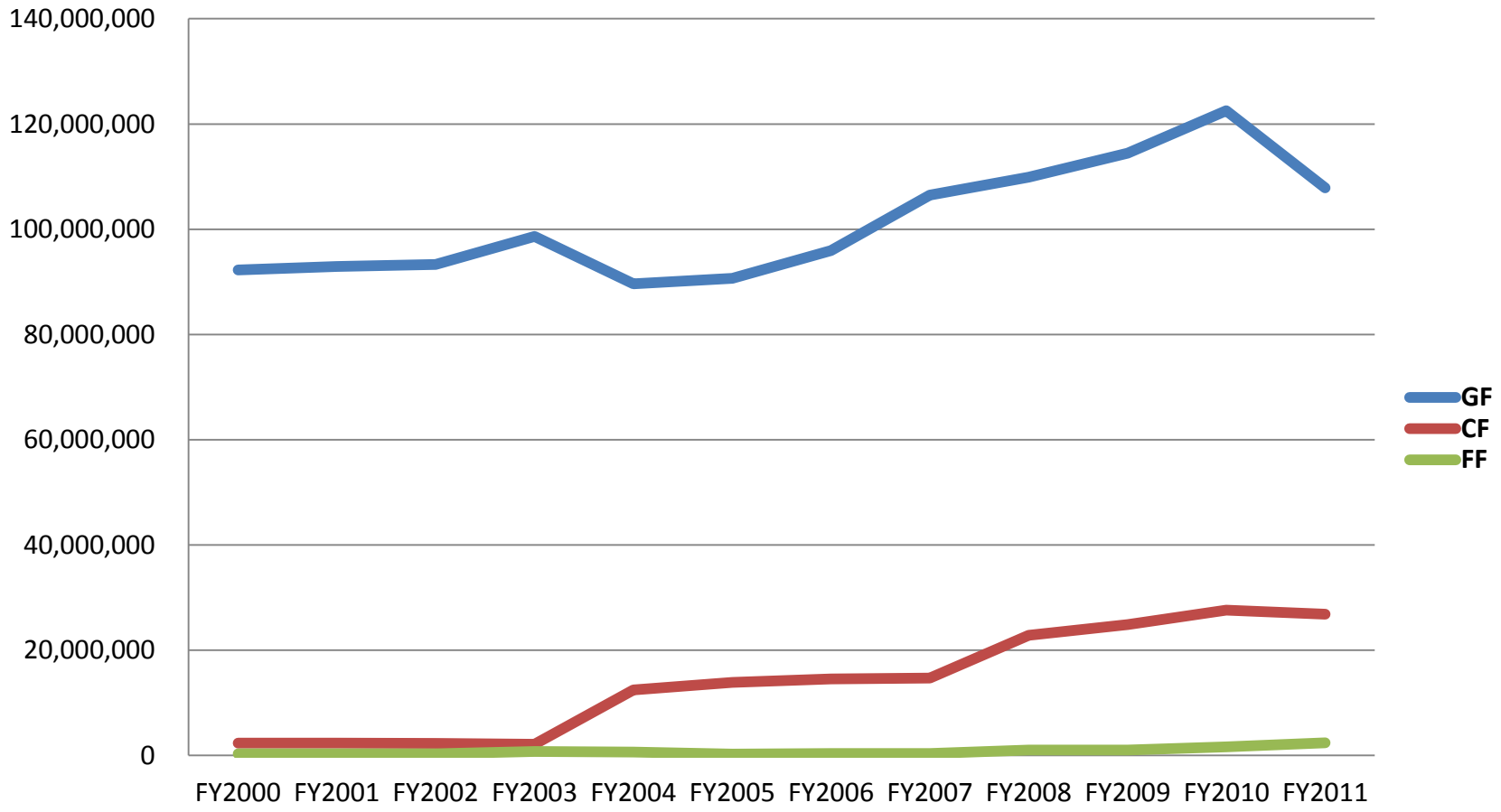


Budget Overview

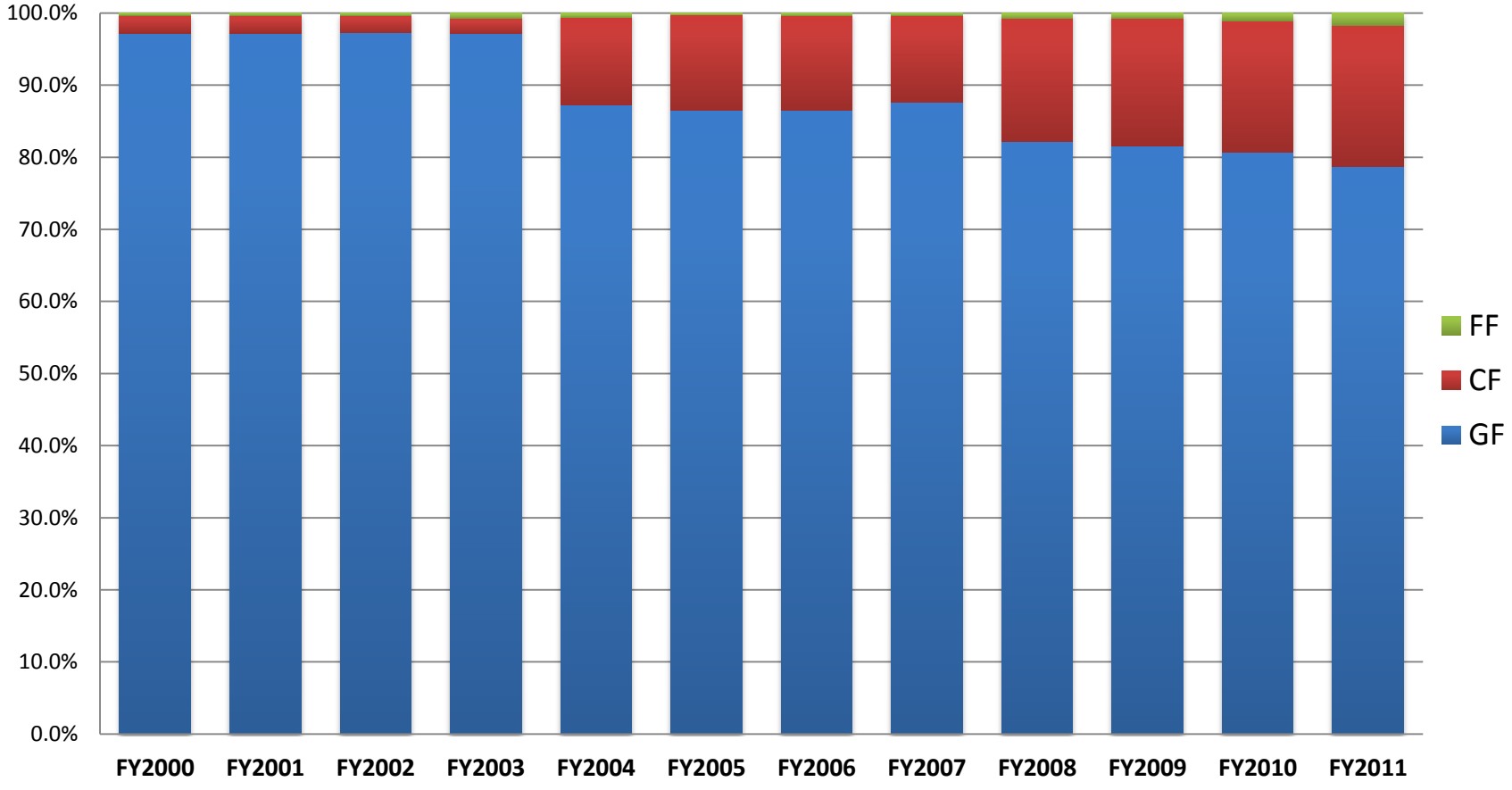
Over the past decade:

- The Judicial budget has increased at an average of 3.4% GF (5.1% TF) primarily driven by the growth in probation as an alternative sentencing option
- The Courts budget has grown at an average of 1.6% GF (3.5% TF)
- The Courts have also made a significant transition to cash funding. In 2000 the Courts were over 97% GF, in 2011 that figure had dropped to 78%.
- The Courts now rely on filing fees for over 20% of the operating budget

Total Judicial Appropriations FY2000 – FY2011



Trial Court Funding Sources FY2000 – FY2011



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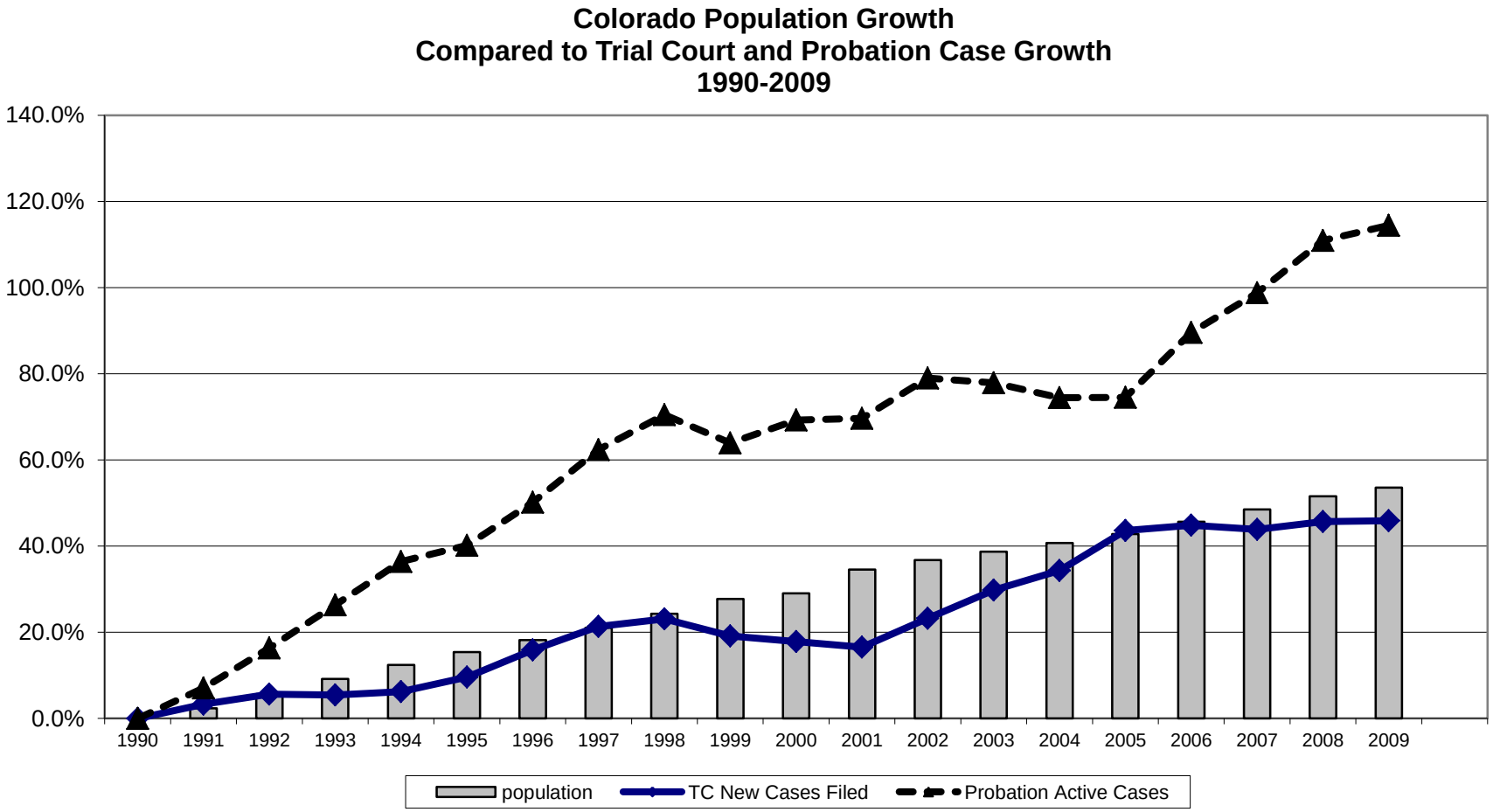

Challenges on the Horizon

- Continued Caseload Pressures
- Increasing Number of Self-Represented Litigants
- Upfront Cost of Innovation

Reducing Redundant Data Entry

- Data sharing with state agencies
  - CICJIS: 5 agency criminal justice data share
  - FAMJIS: common info on dependant children
  - DISH: child support data share with CDHS

- E-filing: file court paperwork electronically

- Public Access System: greater transparency

Efficiencies Implemented

- Drug Courts
- Pro Se Help Centers
- Case management standards
- Consolidation of treatment funds
- Court interpreter call-in center
- Key administrative functions centralized
- Online fine payment
- Automated transfer of drug testing and treatment results

Efficiencies in Process

- Expand Problem Solving Court approach to other appropriate subject areas
- Redevelopment of Judicial Branch management information system--JPOD
- E-citations
- More thorough integration of evidence based practices into probation case management

Other States Look to Colorado

- Many of the innovations other states are considering have already been implemented in Colorado
- Consistently on the leading edge of court technology
- Have utilized cash funded revenue sources faster than other states

General Impact of Cuts on the Courts

Public Safety

- Cuts cause delays in criminal cases and restraining orders.

Impact to Business Community

- Business community needs predictable, timely decisions to function properly.

Disruption to Families

- Families in crisis: divorce, child neglect, incapacitated parent, mental health issue.
- Best way to resolve conflict in family cases is through swift resolution.

Increased Costs to Other Entities

- Delays increase:
  - Incarceration costs
  - Foster care costs
  - Litigation costs

General Impact of Cuts on Probation

Community & Victim Safety

- Larger caseloads =
  - Less time to detect violations;
  - Less predictable outcomes for victims increases chance for re-victimization.

Fewer Successful Terminations

- Larger caseloads = less time to intervene on at-risk behavior.

Increased DOC Costs

- Lower success rates results in more DOC/DYC beds.

21st Century Government

- Principles:
  - Innovative
  - Transparent
  - Evidence Based
  - Appropriately Funded