



Caseload Highlights of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania

September 18, 2020

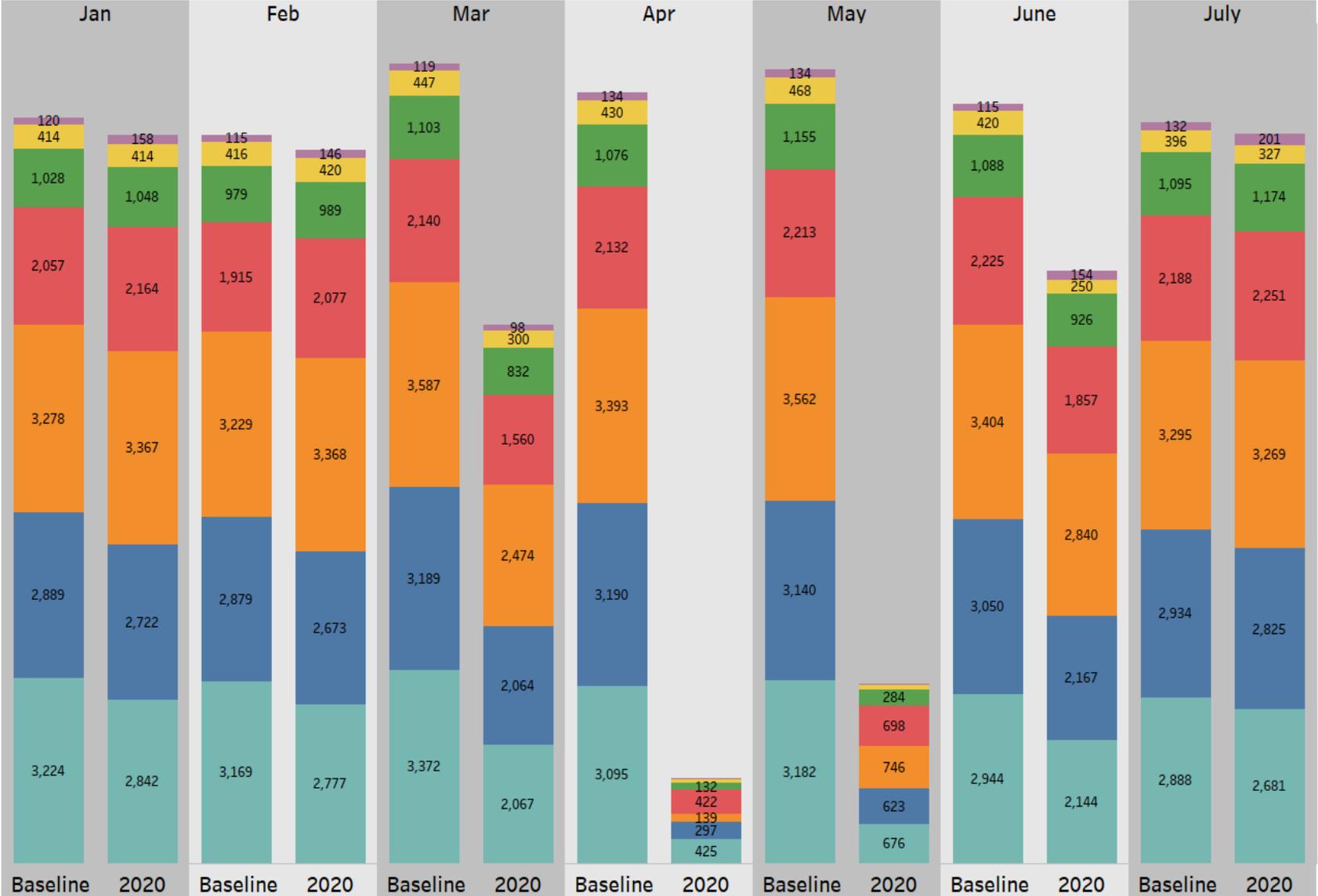
Department of Research & Statistics

Caseload Highlights Definitions and Notes

This report is intended to provide timely information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on court caseloads. Caseload figures are those reported by the judicial districts and have not been verified. Accordingly, they are preliminary and subject to change. This fourth, monthly edition has been updated to feature separate figures for Philadelphia Municipal Court. Please contact Kim Nieves, AOPC Director of Research & Statistics at kim.nieves@pacourts.us with any questions about this report.

- Monthly caseload statistics reports are due to AOPC from the judicial districts on the 15th of the following month; August 2020 reports are due September 15th and this report will be updated for early October release.
- **Baseline** is the average number of filings or dispositions in that month for the past three years.
- **Month to month percent change** is the difference between the baseline compared to the same month in 2020.
- Year to date, or **YTD percent change** is the difference between the cumulative baseline compared to the total number of cases filed so far in 2020.
- **Missing** is the percent of cases not yet reported by the judicial districts; it's calculated as the average percent of the statewide total that a non-reporting district contributes. Data from CPCMS and MDJS systems (criminal, dependency, delinquency & MDJ courts) are extracted from the systems in real time, so there are no missing cases, though there may be docketing delays that will increase figures in later Highlights report versions.

Common Pleas Criminal: Filings

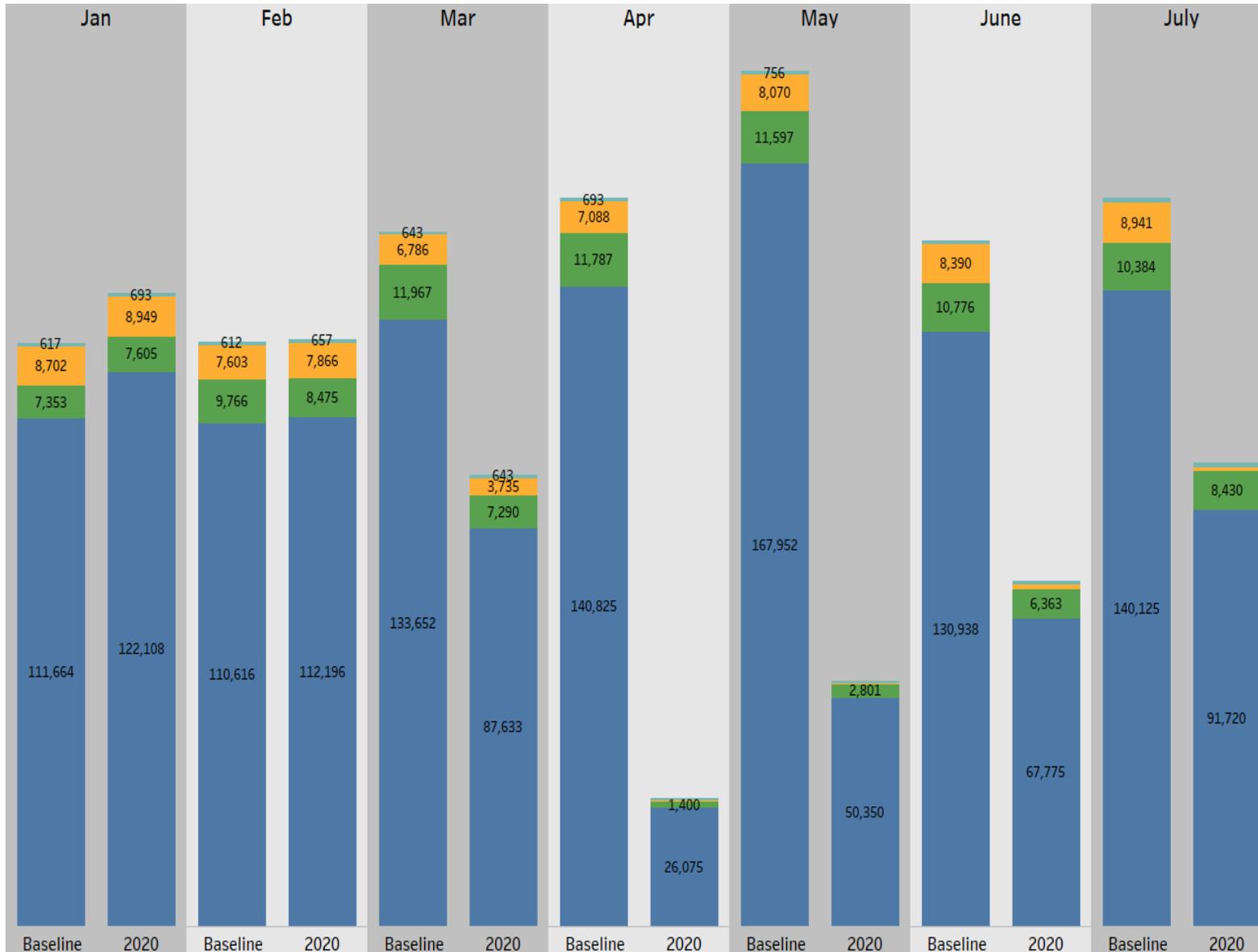


Total year-to-date criminal filings are 33% FEWER than they were at this same time over the last three years.

Case type	Percent change	
	July base- July 20	YTD
Motor Vehicle	52 %	- 9 %
Weapon	- 17 %	-38 %
Public Order	7 %	-28 %
Person	3 %	-26 %
DUI	- 1 %	- 32 %
Drug	- 4 %	- 37 %
Property	- 7 %	- 38 %

Last updated 9/14/2020

MDJ Courts Civil: Filings



Percent change

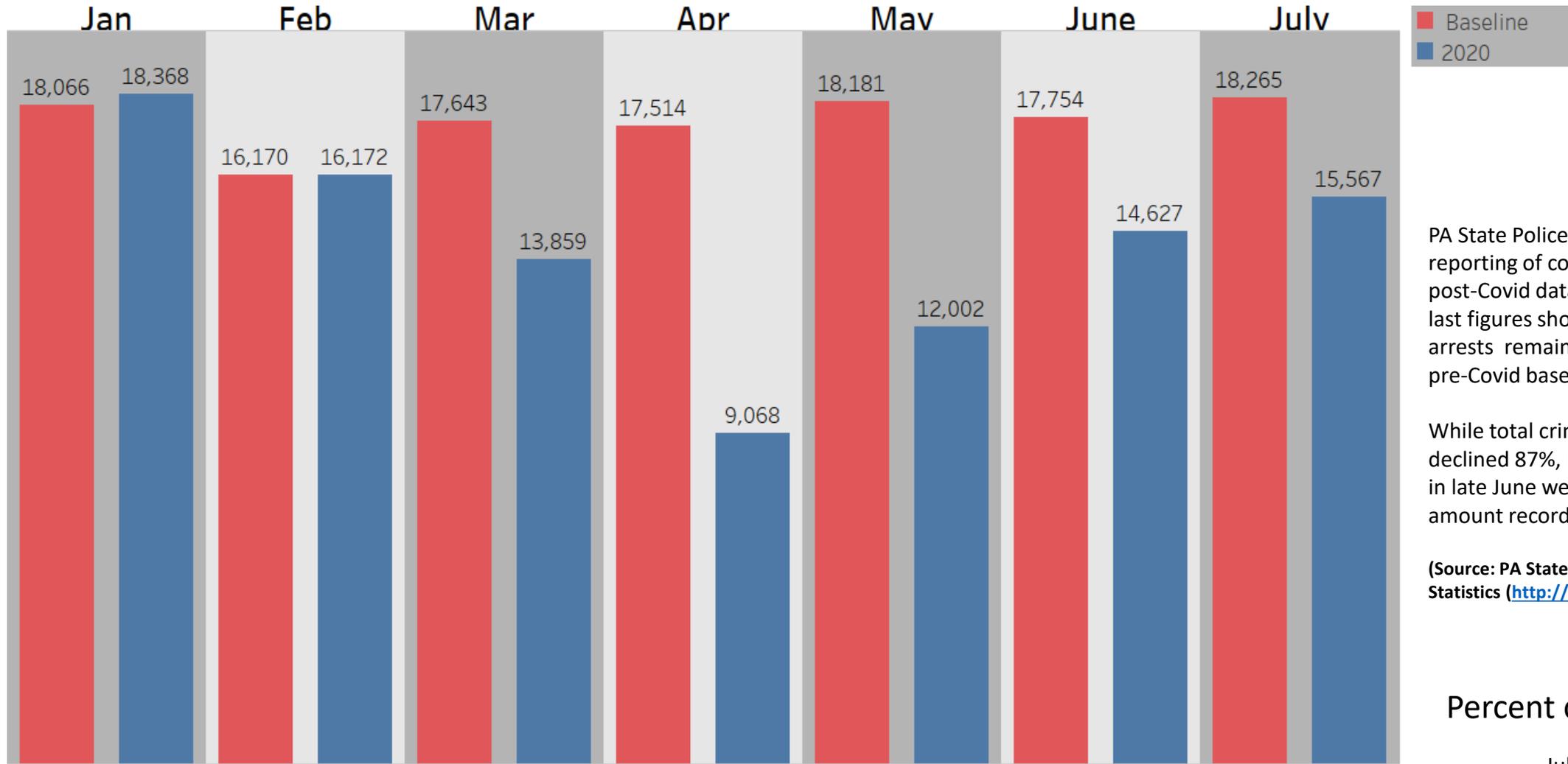
Case type	July base- July 20	YTD
Emergency PFA	- 4 %	- 1 %
Landlord/ Tenant	- 89 %	- 59 %
Civil*	-19 %	- 42 %
Traffic	- 35 %	- 40 %

The state moratorium on Landlord Tenant filings remained in effect thru the end of August, as reflected in the suppressed filings of this case type.

The Caseload Highlights report will feature a separate Landlord Tenant section for a more detailed view of this case type as federal and state restrictions are lifted.

Total traffic citations issued by the PA State Police fell by 35% in July 2020 compared to July 2019. This follows more pronounced declines in June 2020 (-49%), May (-79%), and April (-86%) compared to the same months in 2019.). Source: PA State Police COVID-19 Statistics <http://www.psp.pa.gov>

MDJ Criminal: Filings



PA State Police stopped weekly reporting of comparative pre and post-Covid data in late June. But the last figures showed that total arrests remained 71 % lower than pre-Covid baseline measures.

While total criminal arrests have declined 87%, DUI arrests recorded in late June were the highest weekly amount recorded since mid-March.

(Source: PA State Police COVID-19 Statistics (<http://www.psp.pa.gov>).

Percent change

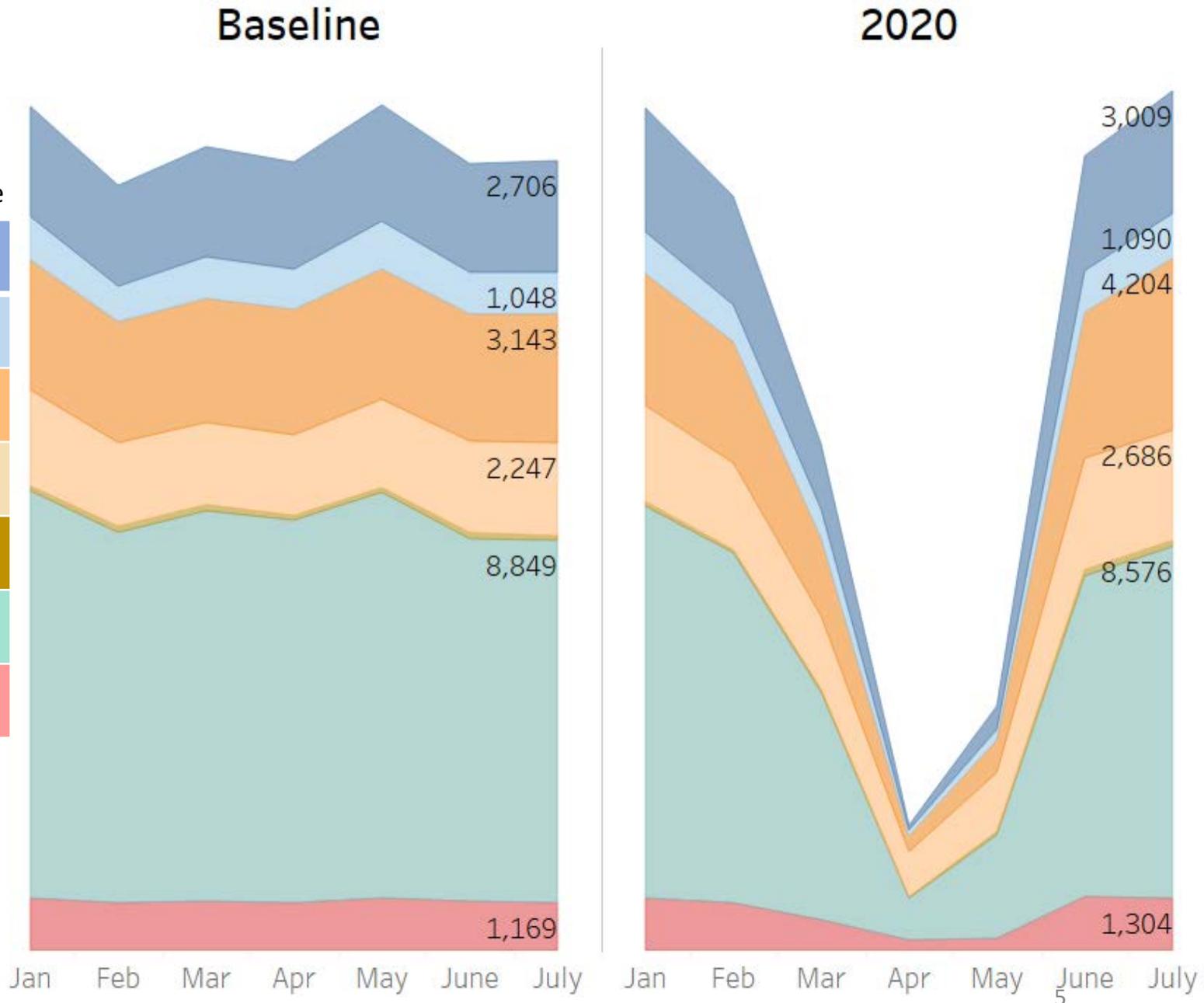
Case type	July base- July 20	YTD
Criminal	- 15 %	- 19 %

MDJ Criminal: Dispositions

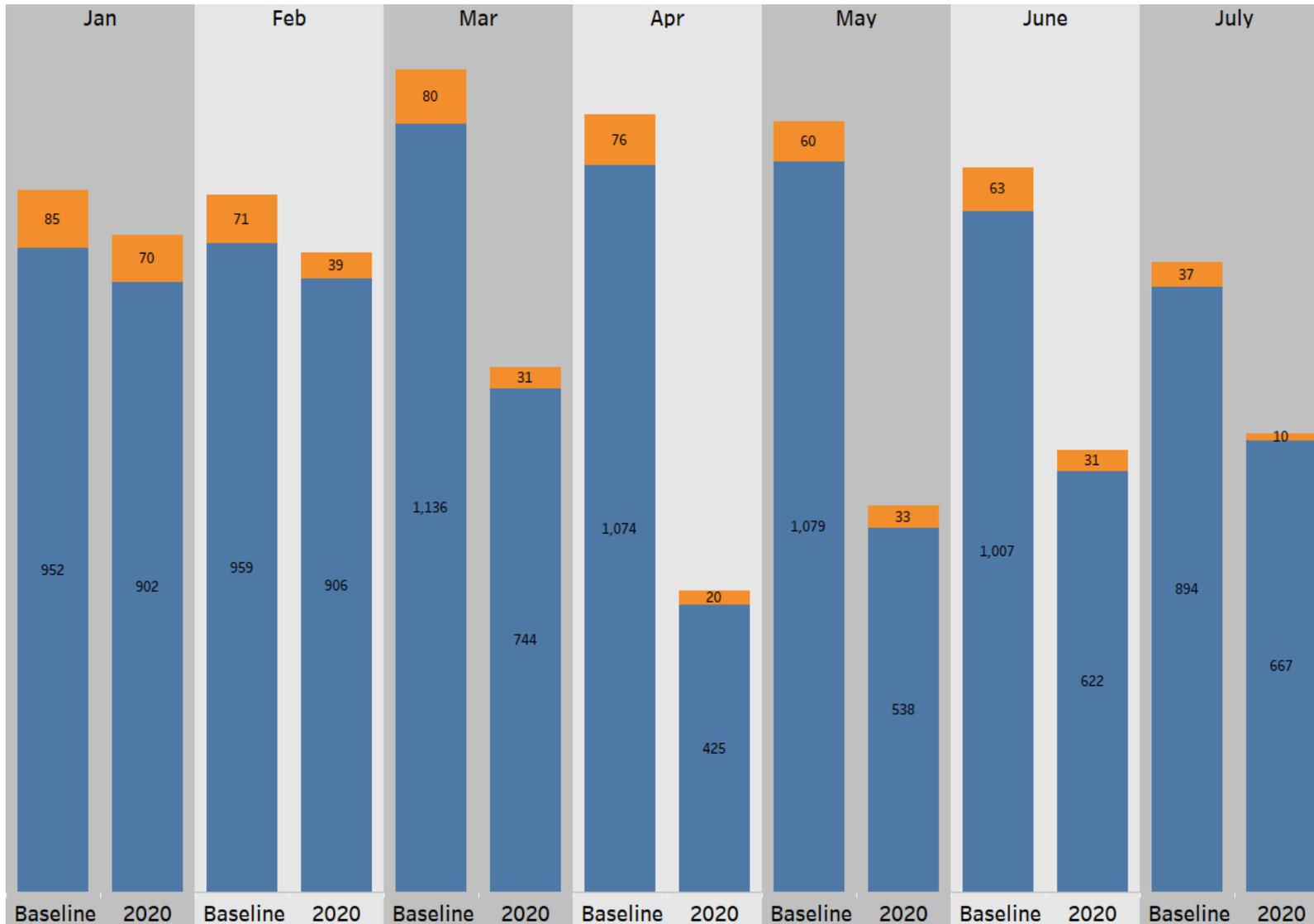
	July 2020 Total	% change from Baseline
Dismissed	3,009	11 %
Guilty Plea	1,090	4 %
Held for Court	4,204	34 %
Inactive	2,686	20 %
Post-dispositional Other*	128	9 %
Waiver of Prelim Hearing	8,576	- 3 %
Withdrawn	1,304	12 %

* Post-dispositional Other dispositions refer to cases dismissed due to a deceased defendant, and cases with a "Sent to Common Pleas" disposition entry.

Last updated 9/14/2020



Juvenile Dependency: Filings



Percent change

Case type	July base- July 20	YTD
Status Offense	- 73 %	- 50%
Abuse/ Neglect	- 25%	-32%

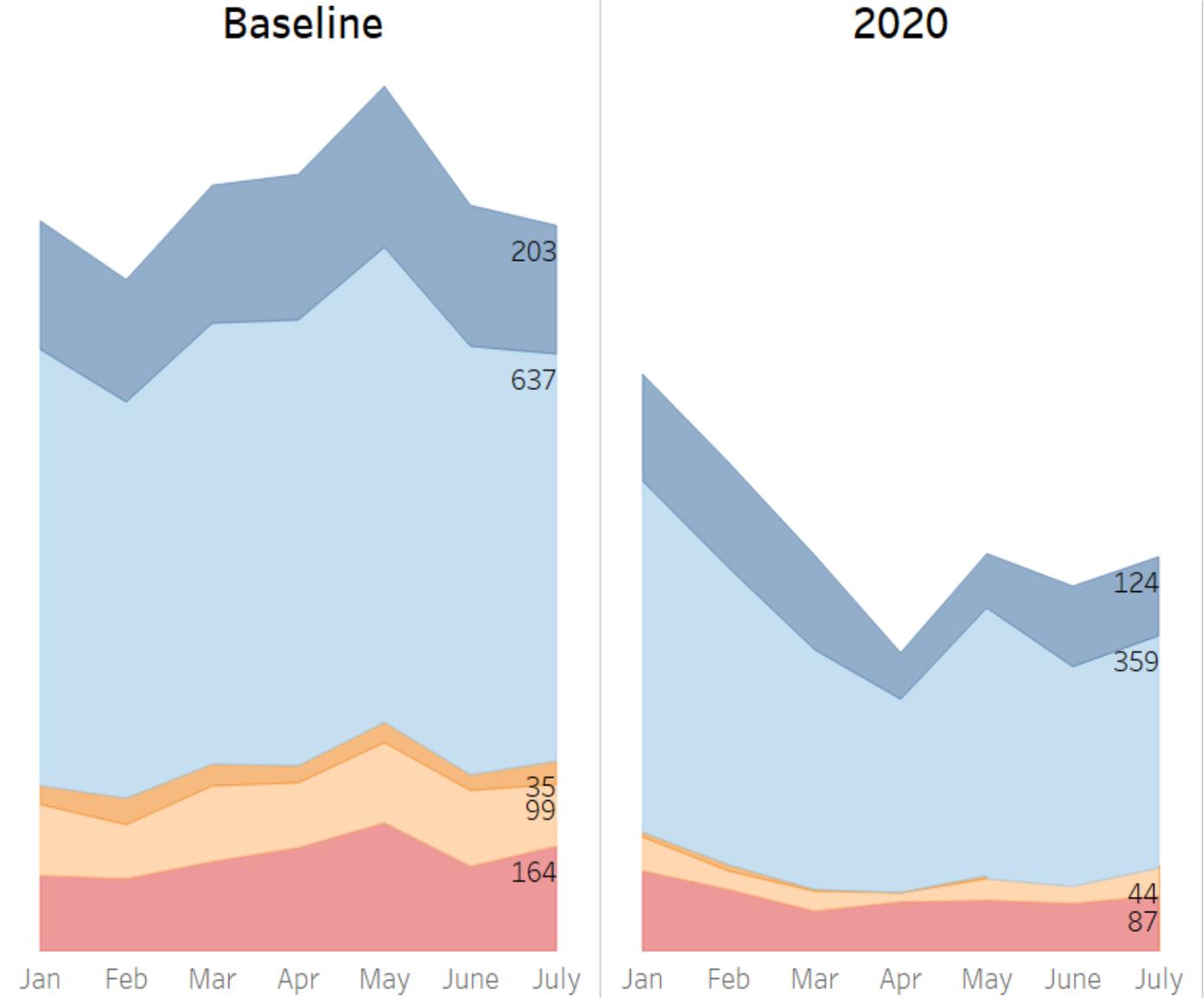
The PA Department of Human Services reported a “roughly 40 to 50 percent decline” in child abuse reporting back in the spring after schools closed. Even this summer – with summer camps and sports camps and library story times canceled – there was a 10 to 12 percent decrease in ChildLine reports compared to the same months in 2019. DHS Secretary Miller attributes this decrease in calls to limited interactions between children and mandated reporters in school settings. Of the 39,040 reports made by mandated reporters to ChildLine in 2018, more than a third were reported by school employees.

(Source: PA Dept. of Human Services news release, 8/20/2020 <https://www.media.pa.gov>)

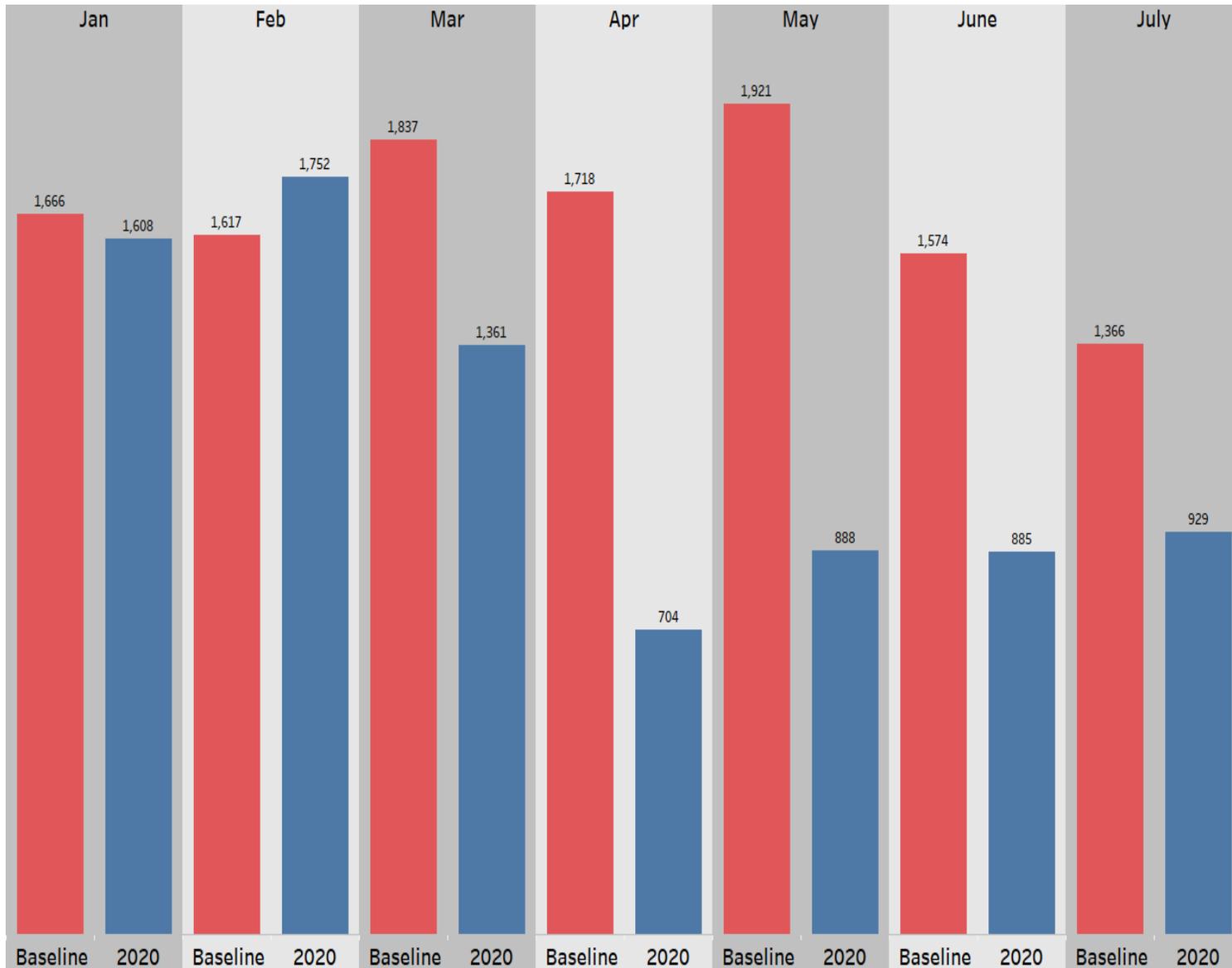
Juvenile Dependency: Dispositions

% change July Base to July 20

Adjudicated Dependent by a Hearing Officer	- 39 %
Adjudicated Dependent by a Judge	- 44 %
NOT Dependent, Hearing Officer	- 89 %
NOT Dependent, Judge	- 56 %
Withdrawn/Dismissed/Inactive	- 47%



Juvenile Delinquency: Filings



Percent change

Case type	July base- June20	YTD
Delinquency	-32 %	-31 %

49% of probation departments reported that **no intakes were occurring** as of March 2020.

Source: Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission, March 2020 survey of 41 county juvenile probation departments

27% of probation departments **furloughed at least some staff.**

(Source: Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission, April 2020 survey of 56 county juvenile probation departments).

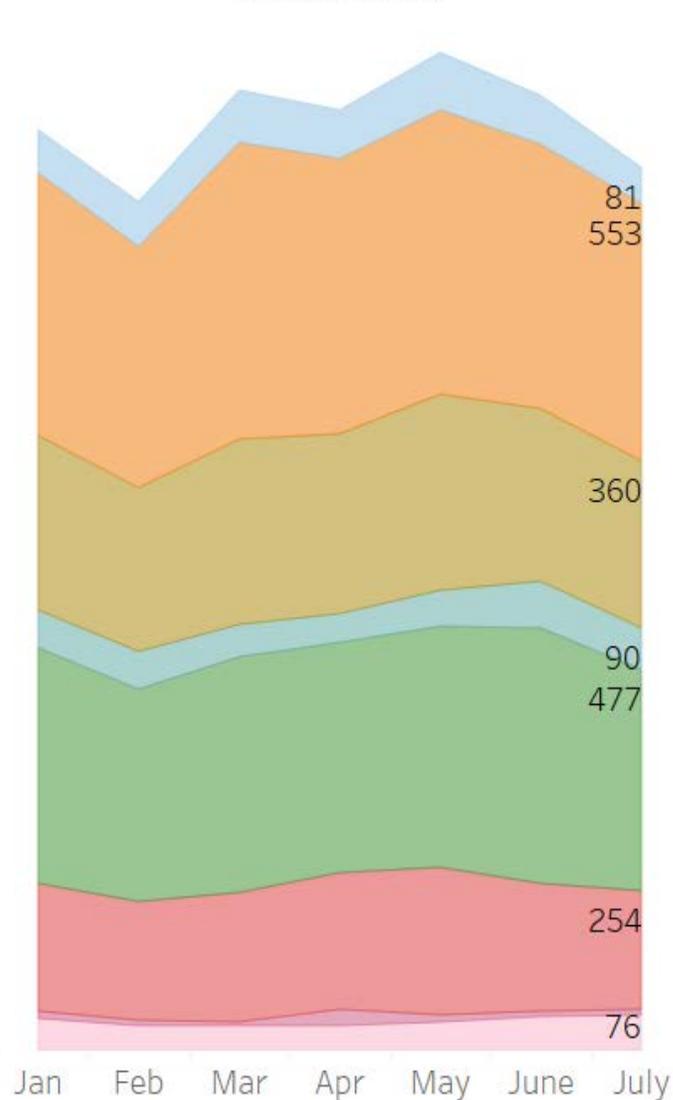
The Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission (JCJC) and the PA Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers have collaborated to minimize the impact of the pandemic on essential operations. A virtual statewide meeting was held on June 5, 2020 to discuss these efforts, which include continued use of videoconferencing technology to maintain contacts with youth, and strengthened local partnerships to ensure that court proceedings and supervision activities continue as scheduled.

Source: Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission June 2020 Newsletter Vol. 31, No.6

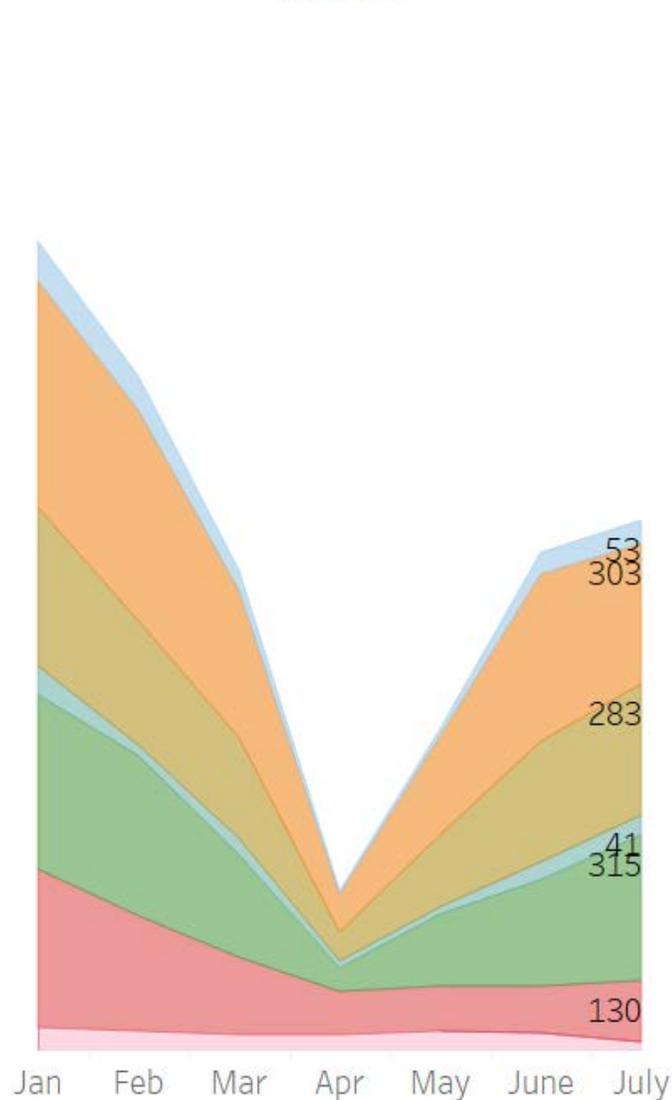
https://www.jcjc.pa.gov/Publications/Newsletters/June_.pdf

Juvenile Delinquency: Dispositions

Baseline



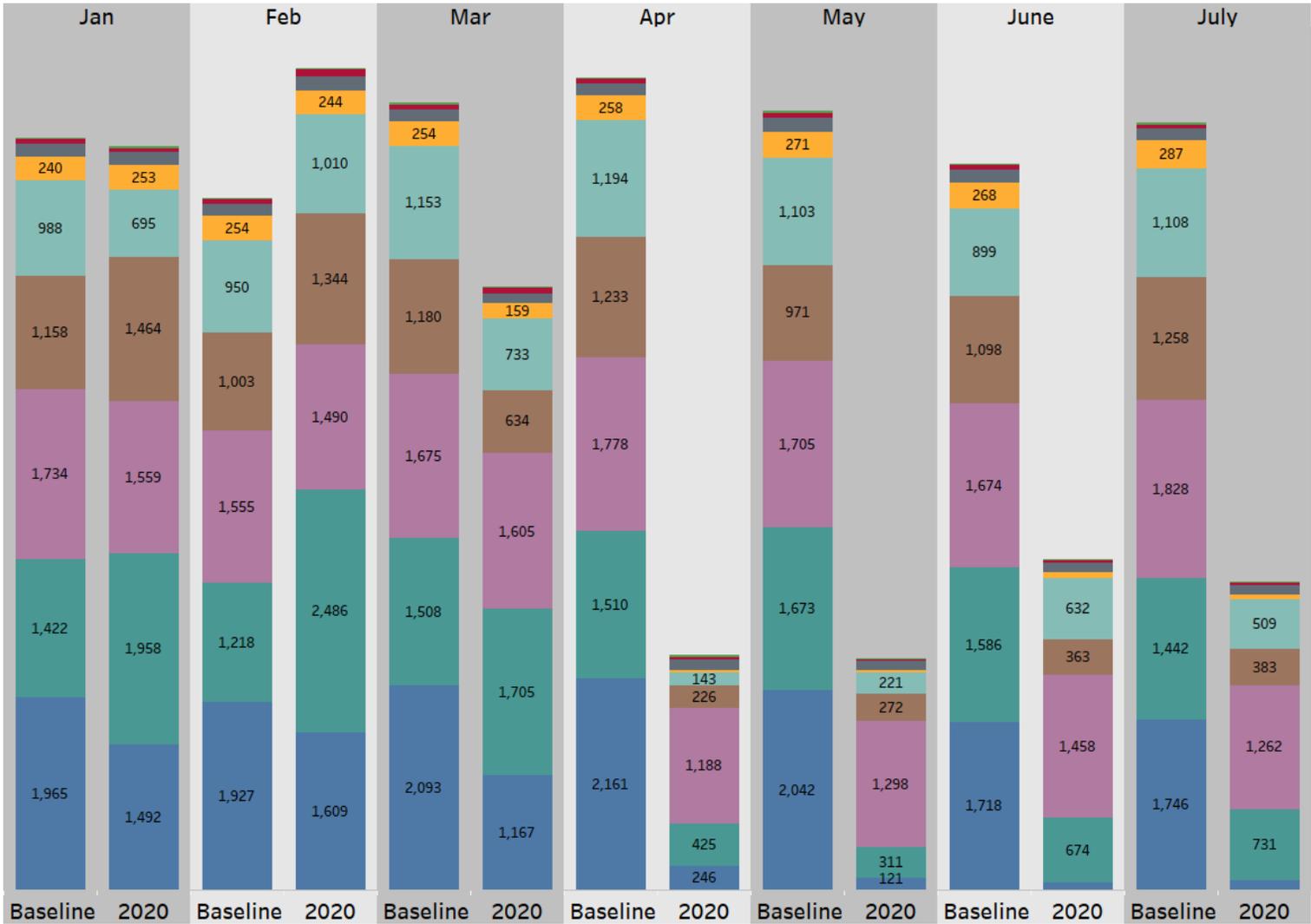
2020



% change July Base to July 2020

Adjudicated Delinquent by a HEARING OFFICER	- 35 %
Adjudicated Delinquent by a JUDGE	- 45 %
Consent Decree	- 21 %
Other	- 54 %
Dismissed/Withdrawn/Transferred	- 34 %
Informal Adjustment	- 49 %
Transfer to Criminal Court (N=3)	- 80 %
Warned/Counseled (pre-petition)	- 76 %

Common Pleas Civil: Filings



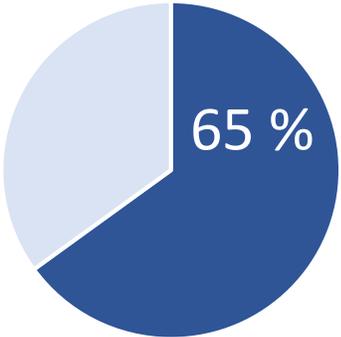
Percent change

Case type	July base- July 20	YTD	Missing
Prof Liability-Other	- 22 %	- 8 %	32 %
Mortgage Foreclosure Commercial	-43 %	- 25 %	23 %
Medical Malpractice	- 28 %	- 12 %	29 %
Landlord Tenant	- 84 %	- 56 %	33 %
Debt Collection Other	- 54 %	- 48 %	32 %
Miscellaneous	- 70 %	- 41 %	9 %
Motor Vehicle Tort	31 %	- 17 %	26 %
Debt Collection Credit Card	- 49 %	- 20 %	28 %
Mortgage Foreclosure Residential	- 95 %	- 65 %	26 %

The **Miscellaneous case category** includes Mandamus, Quo Warranto, Replevin, Declaratory Judgments and other civil filings not separately tracked by the Statewide Civil Cover Sheet.

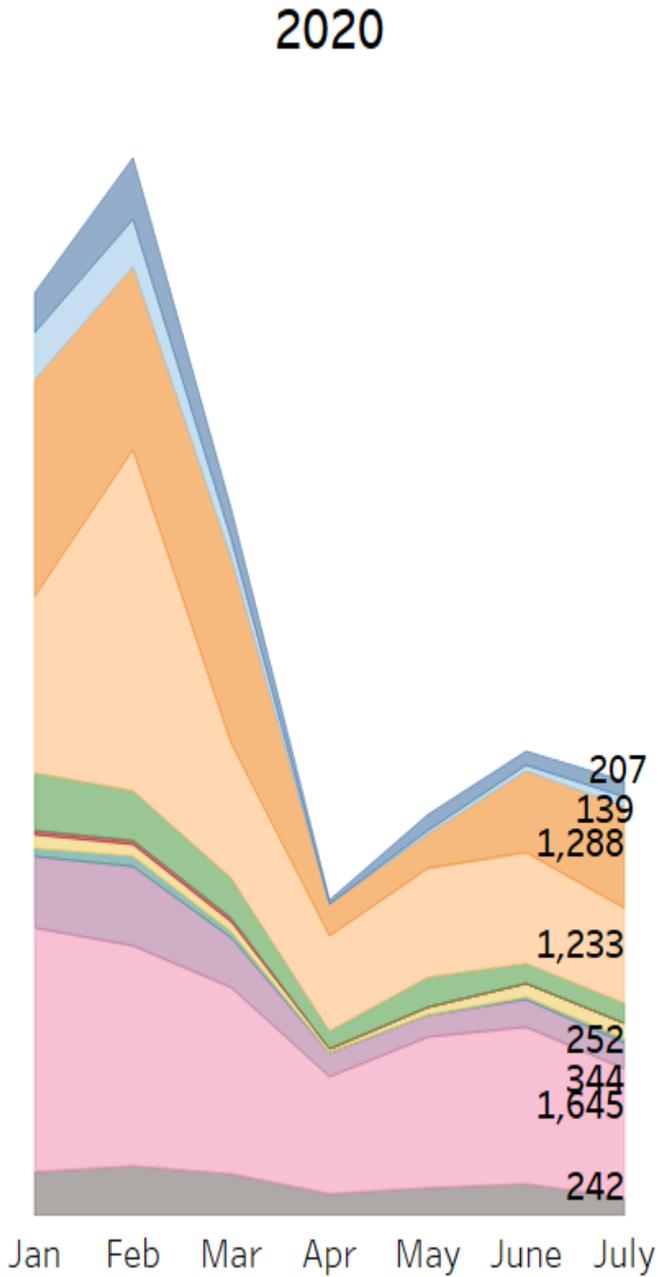
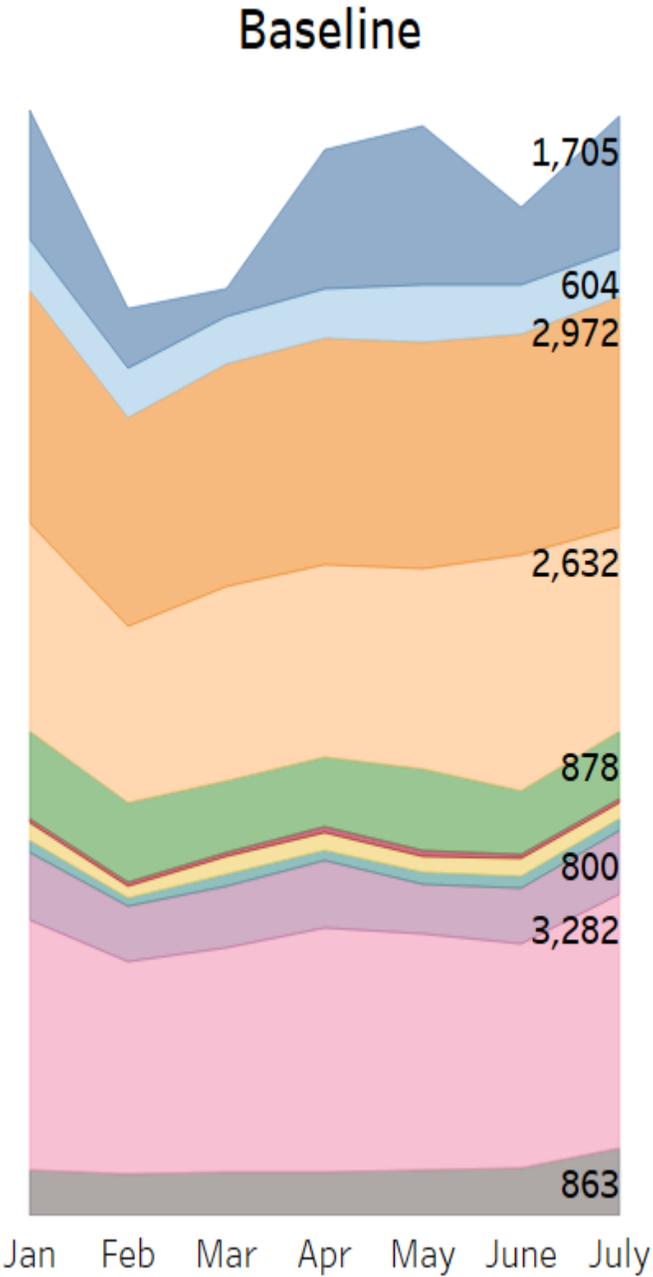
Last updated 9/14/2020 See Endnotes for details about Missing

Only selected civil case types are included reflecting 65% of the state's civil inventory.



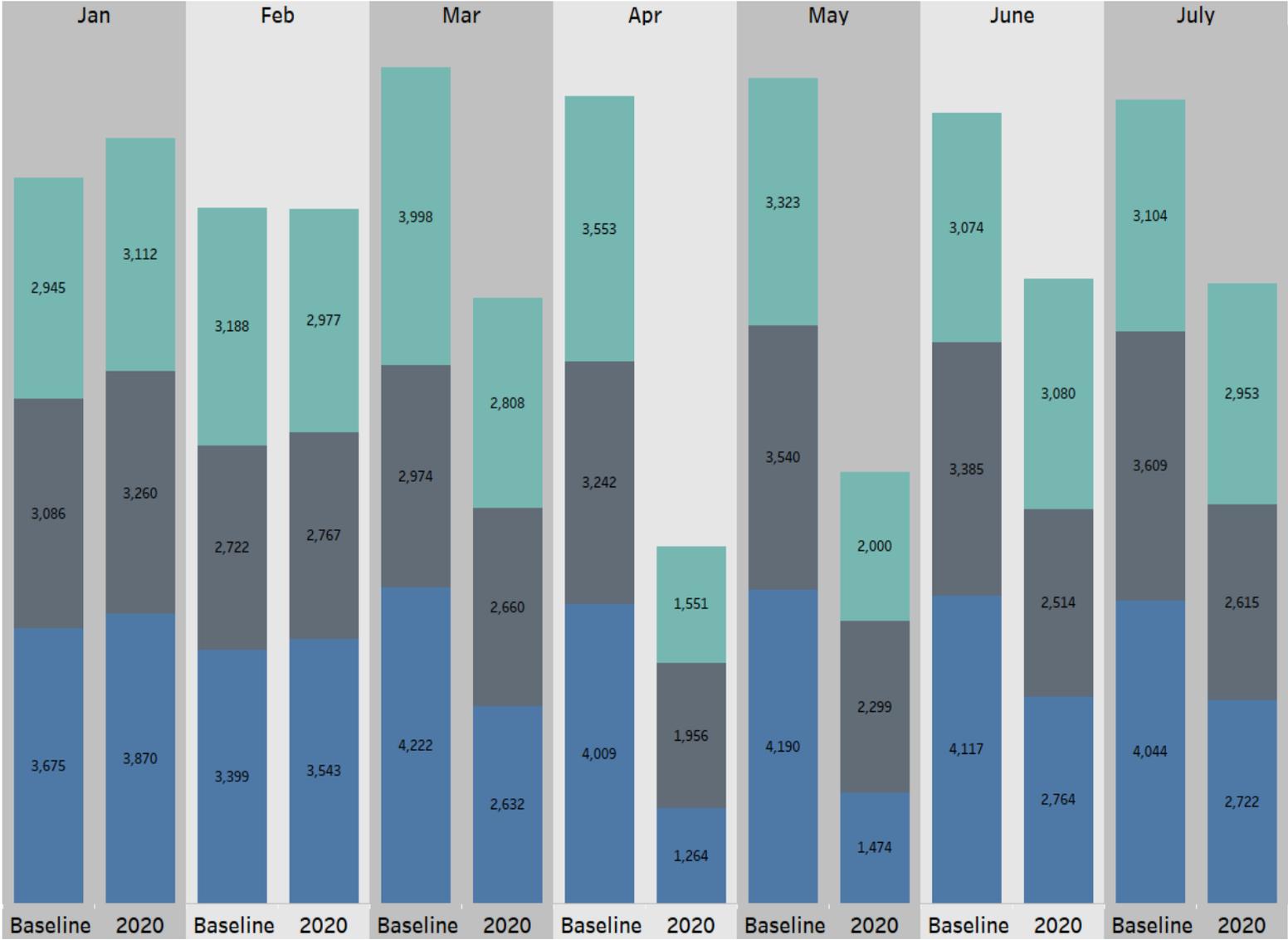
Common Pleas Civil: Dispositions

	July 2020 Total	% change from July base
Administrative Purge	207	- 88 %
Arbitration Board	139	- 77 %
Default Judgments	1,288	- 57 %
Dismissed/Discontinued	1,233	- 53 %
Dispositive Motions	252	- 71 %
Jury Trial	2	- 96 %
Inactive Status	208	2 %
Non Jury Trial	33	- 79 %
Other	344	- 57 %
Settlements	1,645	- 50 %
Transferred/Withdrawn	242	-72 %



Last updated 9/14/2020

Common Pleas Family Court: Filings



Percent change

Case type	July base- July 20	YTD	Missing
Divorce	- 5 %	- 20 %	20%
PFA	- 28 %	- 21 %	23%
Custody	- 33 %	- 34 %	20%

Many Prothonotaries accept filings via email, e-filing, U.S. mail, or a dedicated drop box.

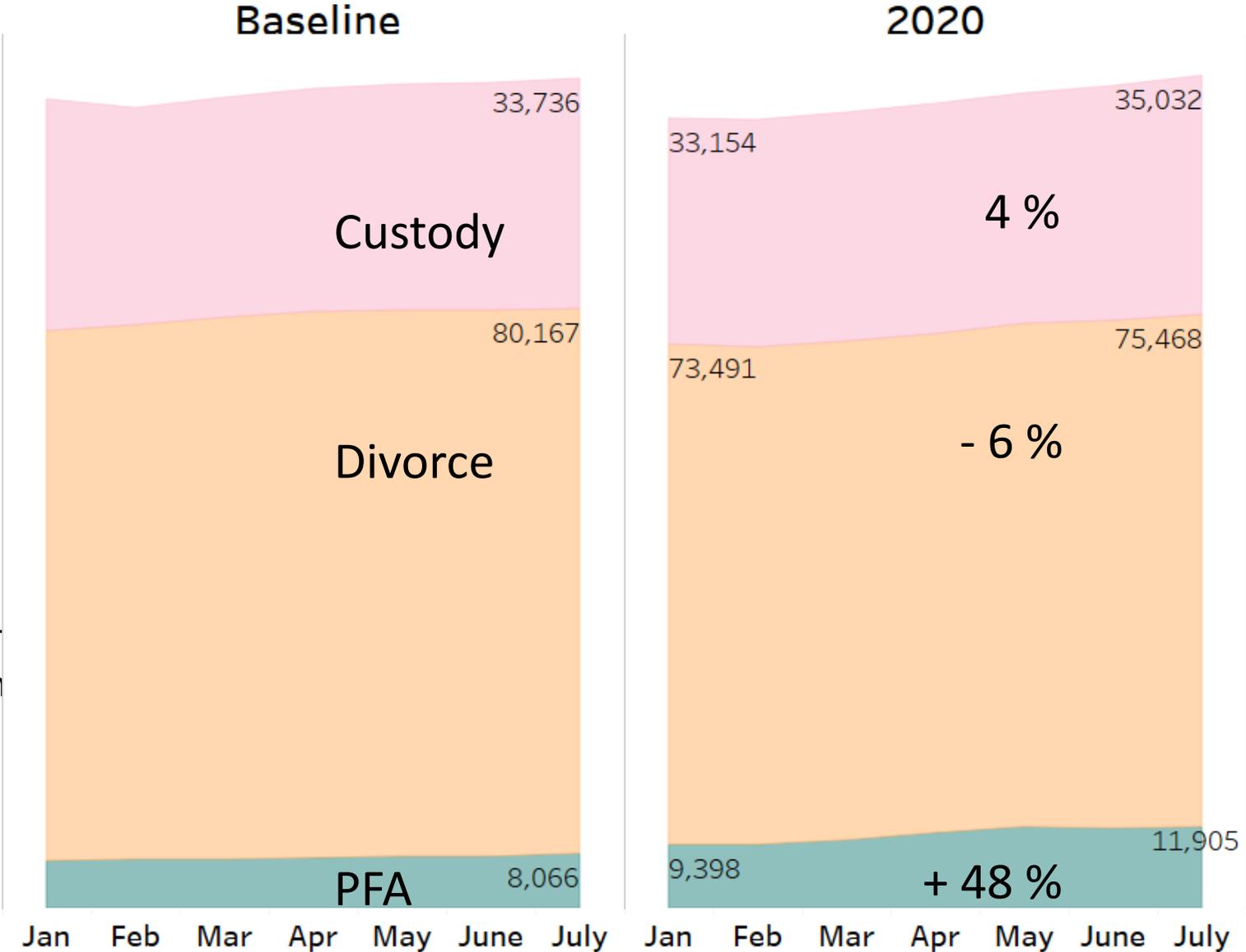
As counties report their caseload statistics to AOPC, many advise of docketing delays due to staff furloughs.

Common Pleas Family Court: Active Cases Awaiting Disposition

While the adjudication of pending family cases abruptly slowed in the early weeks of the judicial emergency, filings also decreased significantly.

As a result, the number of custody and divorce cases awaiting disposition are comparable to baseline figures, though the cases in the inventory are likely to be older as a result of pandemic related delays.

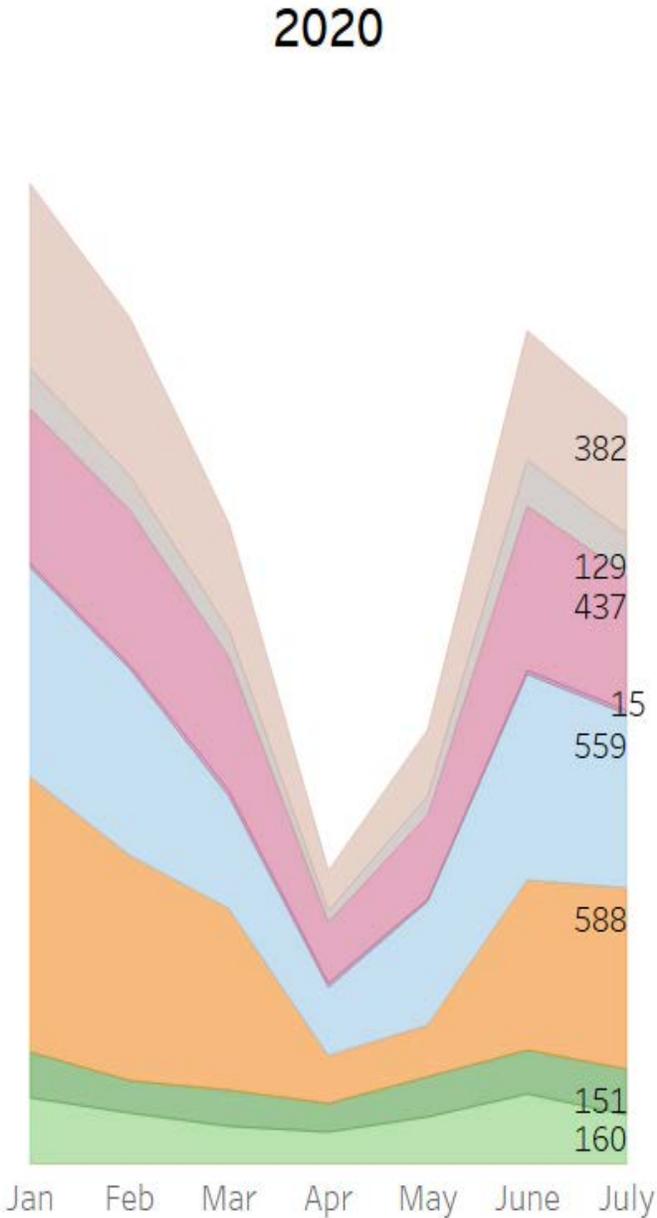
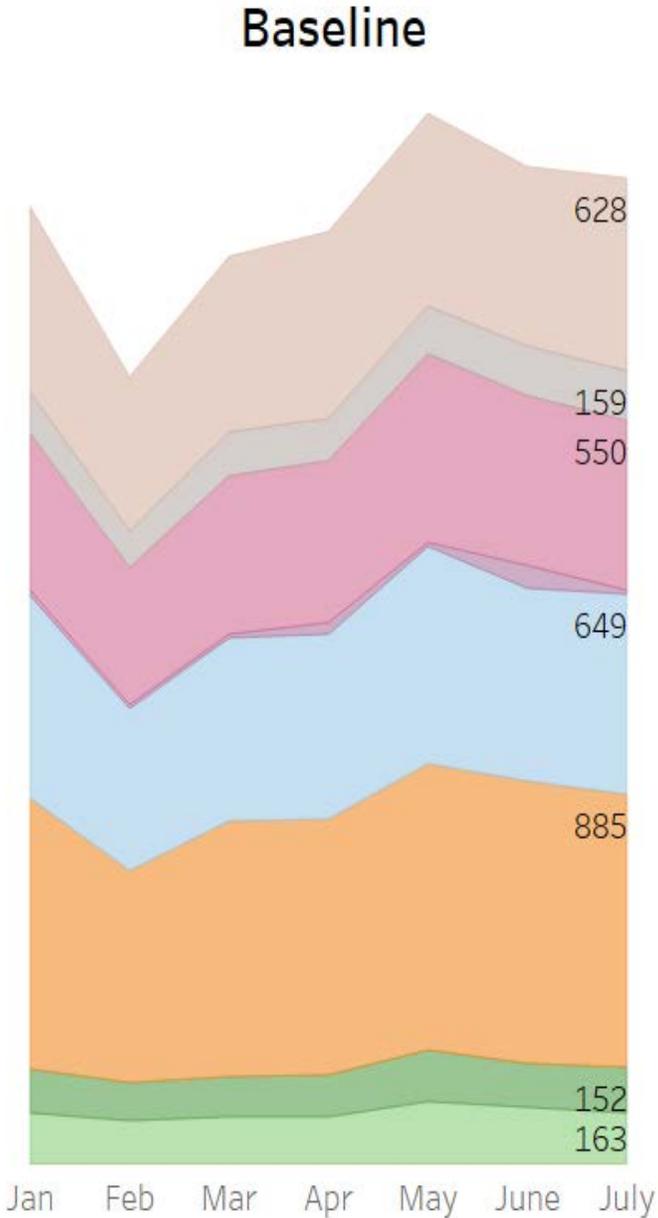
The processing of PFA cases is governed by statutory timelines, however many counties continued Temporary PFA Orders for the duration of the judicial emergency, leading to decreases in cases processed and increases in pending cases. The number of pending matters awaiting action at the end of July was 48 % higher than in prior years, despite 23 % fewer filings.



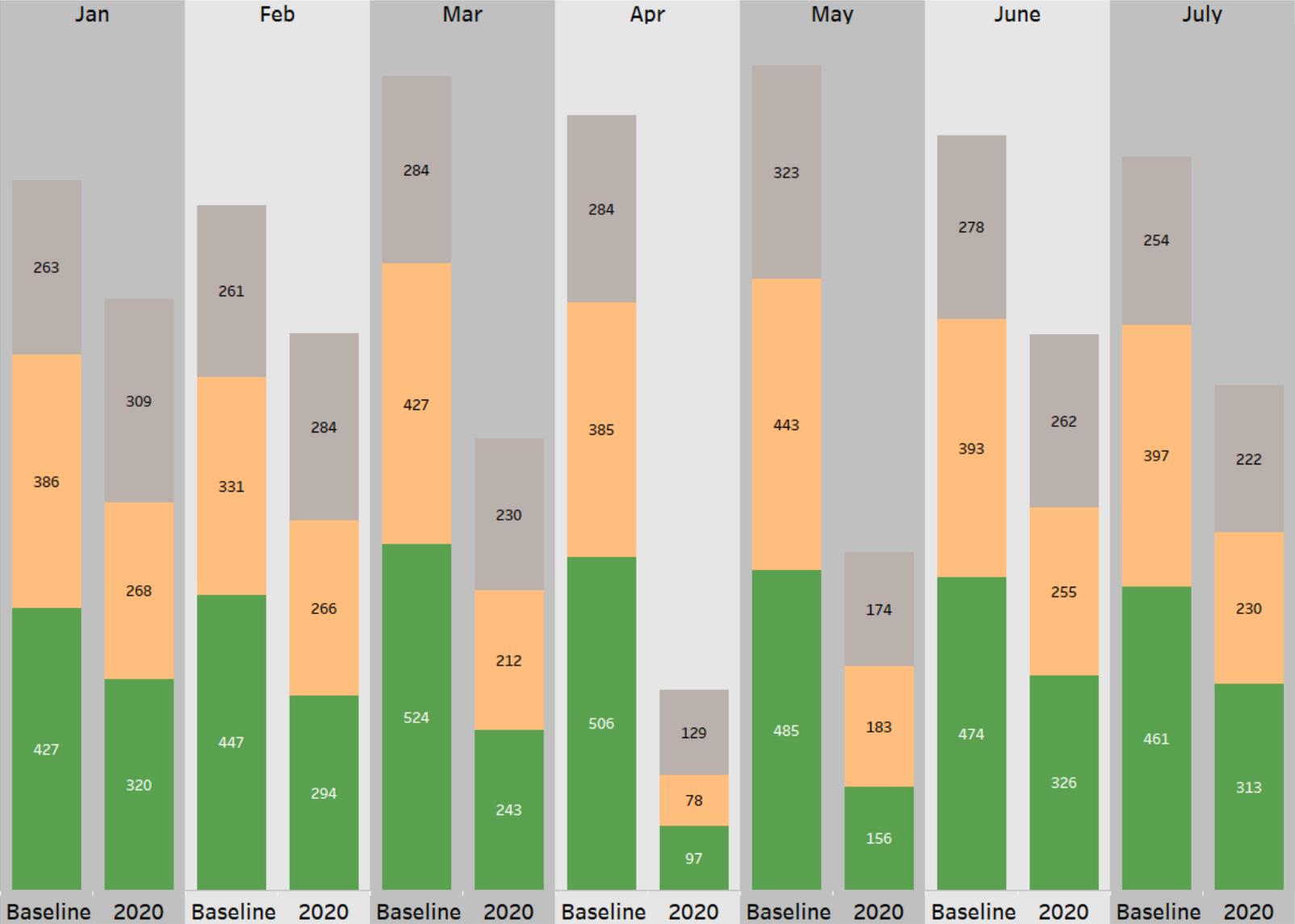
Common Pleas PFA Case Processing

% change June Baseline to July 20

Final Order by Stipulation or Agreement	- 39 %
Final Order DENIED after Evidentiary Hearing	- 19 %
Final Order GRANTED after Evidentiary Hearing	- 21 %
Other	- 67 %
Withdrawn by Plaintiff	- 14 %
Plaintiff Did Not Appear	-34 %
Temp Order DENIED After Ex Parte Hearing, no Evidentiary Hearing Scheduled	- 0 %
Temp Order Dismissed After Evidentiary Hearing	- 2 %



Common Pleas Orphans' Court: Filings



Percent change

Case type	July base- July 20	YTD	Missing
Guardianships	- 13 %	- 19 %	15%
Adoptions	- 42 %	- 47 %	12%
Relinquishments/ Terminations	- 47 %	- 48 %	16%

As counties report their caseload statistics to AOPC, many advise of docketing delays due to staff furloughs.

Counties also advise that county Children and Youth Services (CYS) staff furloughs may result in fewer Relinquishment/Termination filings.

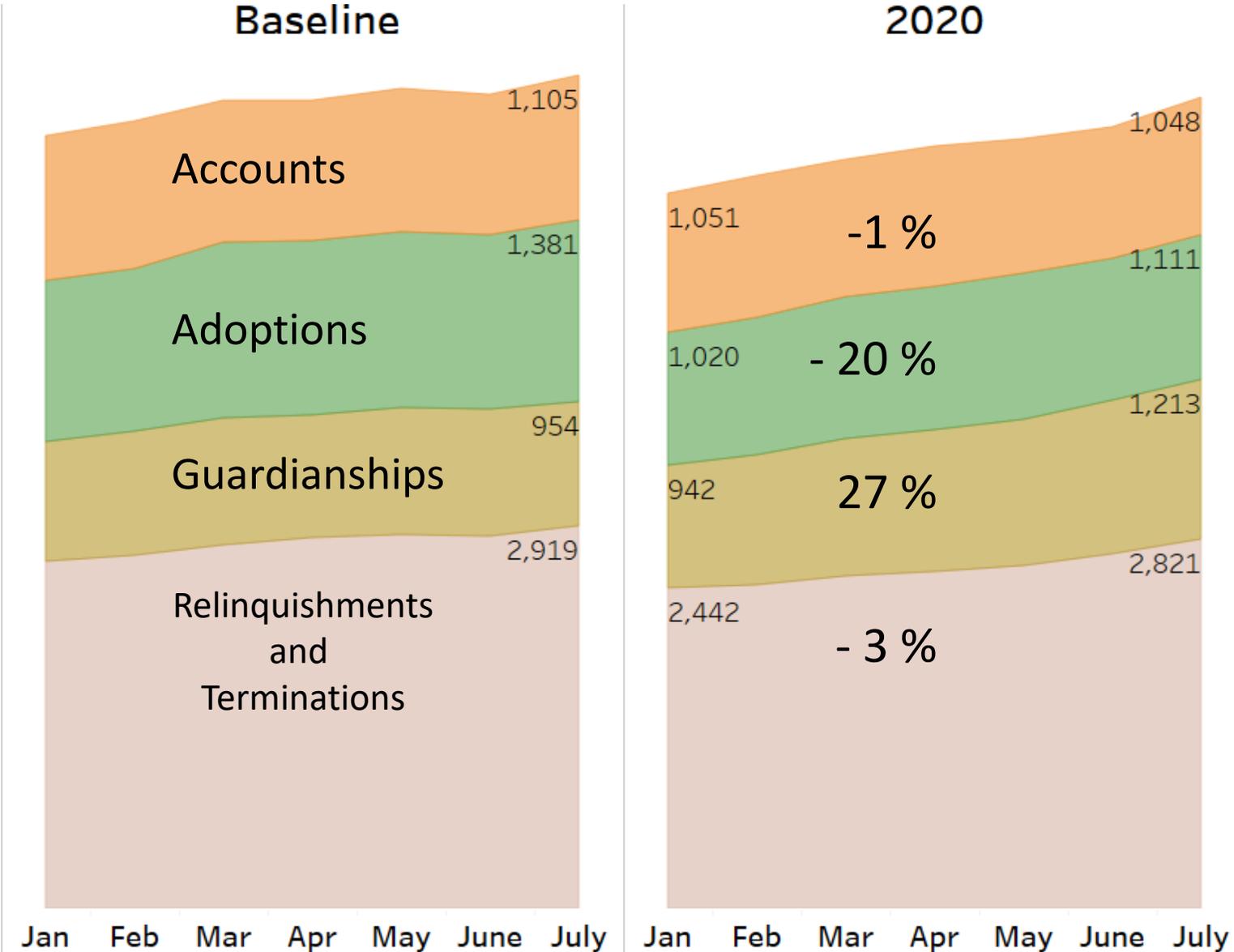
In many counties, Register of Wills/Clerk of Orphans' Court accept filings via email, U.S. mail, or dedicated drop box.

Common Pleas Orphans' Court: Active Cases Awaiting Disposition

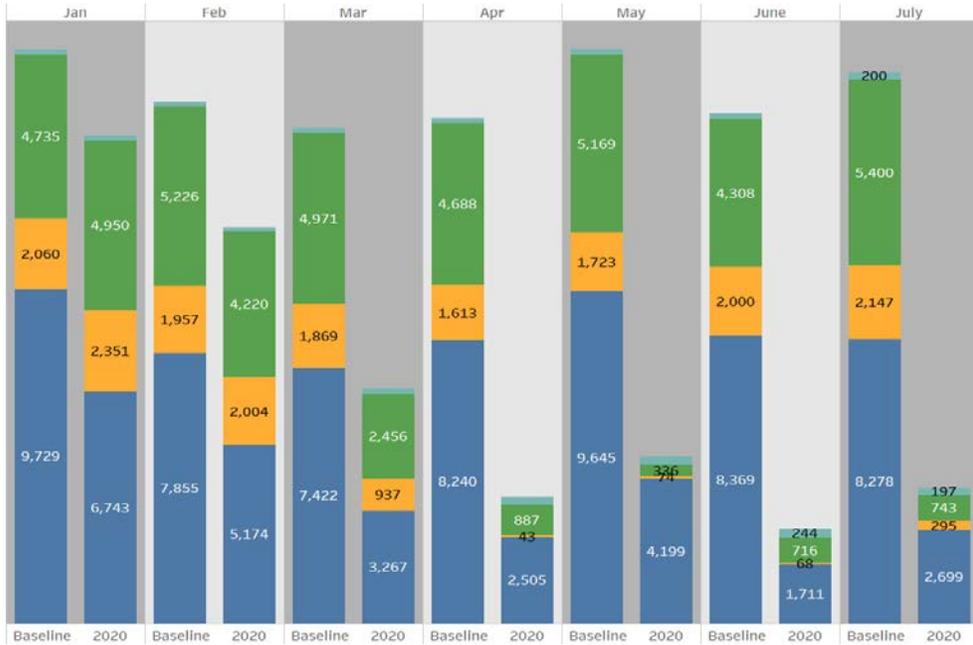
While the adjudication of pending Orphans' Court matters abruptly slowed during the early weeks of the judicial emergency, filings also decreased significantly.

As a result, the number of Accounts and Adoptions are **slightly fewer than the baseline months of past years**, though the cases in the inventory are likely to be older as a result of pandemic related delays.

There is a 27 % increase in the pending Guardianship inventory as compared to the baseline and since January of 2020.



Philadelphia Municipal Court: Civil

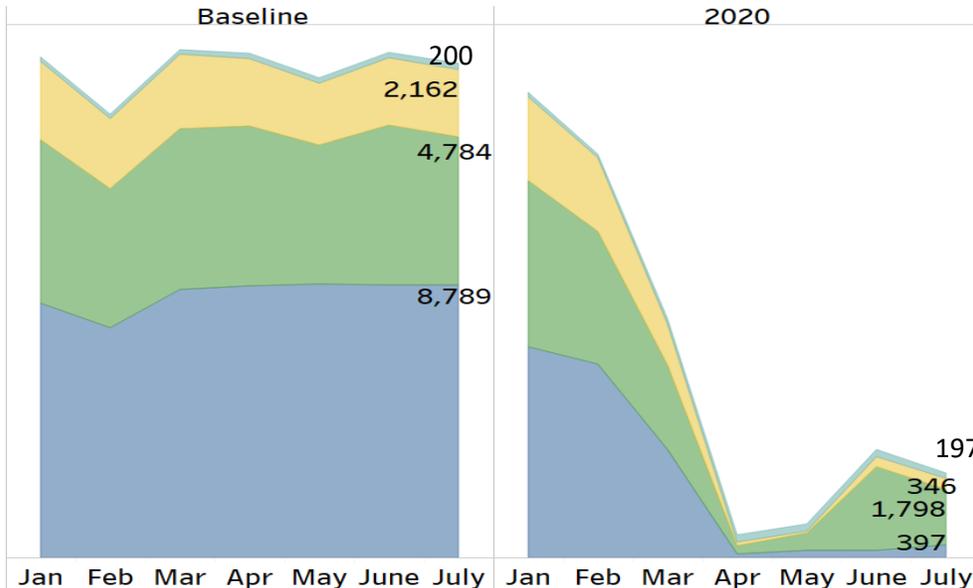


Filings:

Percent change

Case type	July base- July 20	YTD
Emergency PFA	- 1.5 %	20 %
Landlord/ Tenant	- 86 %	- 57 %
Civil	- 86 %	- 52 %
Traffic	- 67 %	- 56 %

The number of all filings remain sharply suppressed with the exception of Emergency PFAs which are **20 % higher** at this point in the year than in baseline years.

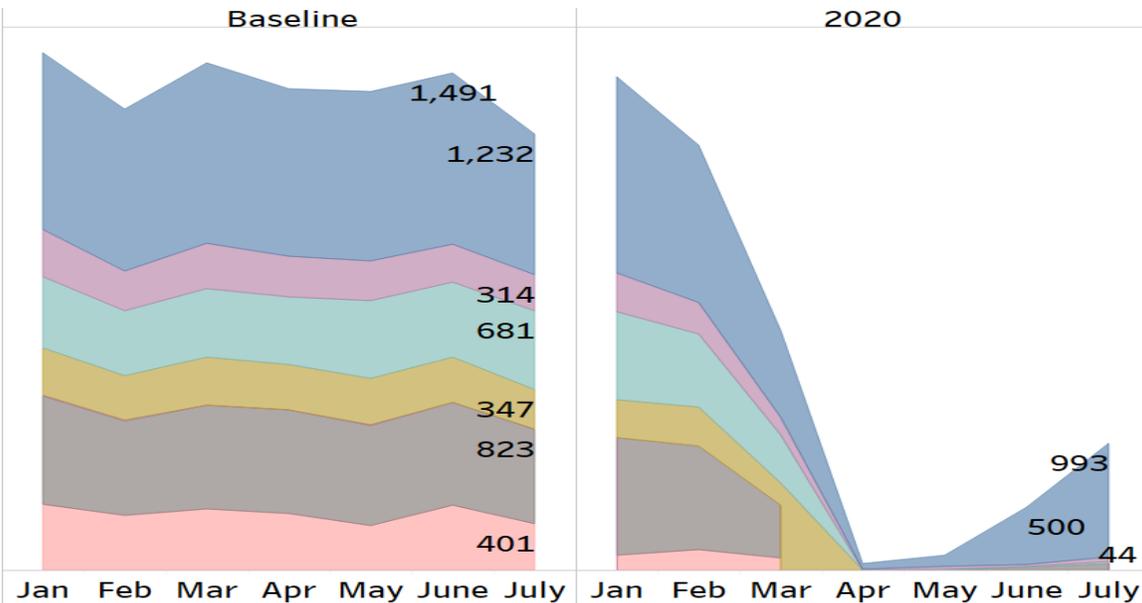
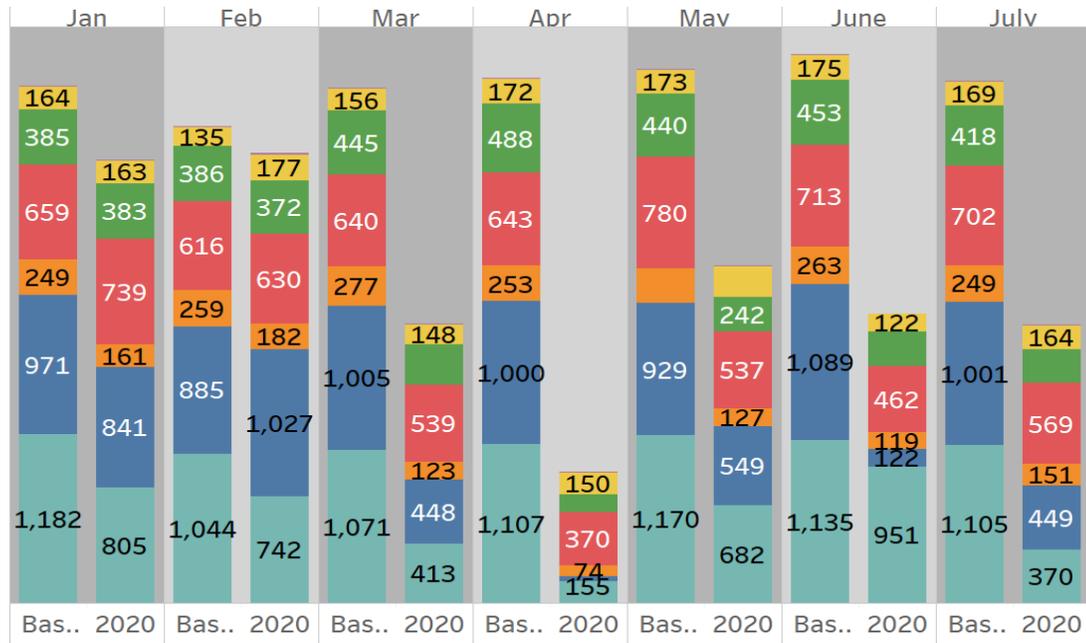


Dispositions:

Percent change

Case type	July base- July 20	YTD
Emergency PFA	- 2 %	20 %
Landlord/ Tenant	- 84 %	- 54 %
Civil	- 62 %	- 49 %
Traffic	- 95 %	- 71 %

Philadelphia Municipal Court: Criminal



Filings:

Percent change

Case type	July base- July 20	YTD
Weapon	- 3 %	< - 1 %
Public Order N= 239	- 44 %	- 38 %
Person	- 19 %	- 19 %
DUI	- 39 %	- 48 %
Drug	- 55 %	- 50 %
Property	- 67 %	- 47 %

Dispositions:

Percent change

Case type	July base- July 20	YTD
Dismissals N=993	- 19 %	- 46 %
Guilty pleas N= 44	- 86 %	- 66 %
Inactive cases N=10	- 99 %	- 58 %
No penalty dispositions N=0	- 100 %	- 69 %
Other N= 2	- 33 %	- 91 %
Transfers N=59	- 93 %	- 60 %
Trial/Non trial N=0	- 100 %	- 89 %

COMMON PLEAS CIVIL:

For July 2020, 15 counties have yet to submit their July Civil Court Report (as of 8/24/2020). These counties account for 27% of the total of Civil filings annually.

- ✓ Of note, counties yet to submit reports for July include Allegheny County – accounting for 12% of the state total, Bucks County – accounting for 6% of the state total, Delaware County - accounting for 5% of the state total, and Lackawanna Counties - accounting for 2% of the state total.

COMMON PLEAS FAMILY:

- Custody & Divorce: for July 2020, 18 counties have yet to submit their July reports (as of 8/24/2020).
 - ✓ Custody cases: the 18 counties yet to submit account for 20% of the Custody filings annually.
 - ❖ Of note, counties yet to submit include Bucks and Lehigh Counties – each accounting for 4% of the state total, and Chester, Cumberland and Delaware, each accounting for 2% of the total cases filed each year.
 - ❖ Of the 18 counties yet to report for July, six counties each account for 1% of the total cases filed each year.
 - ✓ Divorce cases: the 18 counties yet to submit account for 20% of the total annual filings.
 - ❖ Of note, counties yet to submit July reports include Bucks, Chester and Delaware Counties, each accounting for 3% of the total cases filed.
 - ❖ Cumberland and Lehigh Counties have yet to submit their July reports and each account for 2% of the total cases filed each year.
- PFA: for July 2020, 14 counties have not reported data (as of 8/24/2020).
 - ✓ These counties account for 23% of the state total based on the three year average (baseline figure).
 - ✓ Of note, counties that have not submitted July reports include Allegheny County – accounting for 9% of the annual total, Delaware County – accounting for 5% of the annual total, and Bucks and Lackawanna Counties, each accounting for 2% of the annual total of new cases filed.

COMMON PLEAS ORPHANS' COURT: For July 2020, 12 counties have yet to submit their July reports (as of 8/24/2020).

- Adoptions: the 12 counties yet to submit July reports account for 12% of the total annual filings.
 - ✓ Of note, counties that have not submitted July reports include Allegheny County – 6% of the annual filings, Bucks County - 3% of total annual filings, and Westmoreland County – 2% of the total annual filings.
- Relinquishments/Terminations: the 12 counties yet to submit their July reports account for 16% of the total annual filings.
 - ✓ Of note, counties that have not submitted July reports include Allegheny County - 6% of the annual filings, Westmoreland County - 4% of annual filings, and Bucks County - 3% of the annual filings.
- Guardianship: the 12 counties yet to submit their July reports account for 15% of the total annual filings.
 - ✓ Of note, counties that have not submitted July reports include Allegheny County – 6% of the annual total, Bucks County - 4% of the total annual filings, and Westmoreland County - 3% of the total annual filings.