



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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West Virginia Supreme Court wins national award

For immediate release

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia has won the Court Statistics Project 2015 Reporting Excellence Award.

“The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals is being recognized as a leader among state courts when it comes to reporting on its caseload. These statistics are essential for effective management of the state appellate courts. Publishing these data and inviting comparison with other courts demonstrates a commitment to transparency and accountability that is the hallmark of a well-run court,” said Richard Schaffler, Director of the Court Statistics Project at the National Center for State Courts.

The West Virginia Supreme Court Clerk’s Office implemented the appellate case types recommended in the State Court Guide to Statistical Reporting in 2011, which doubled the number of case types reported by the Court and increased the Supreme Court’s ability to describe its caseload.

Previously, cases were generally classified as “civil” or “criminal,” and no information was provided about the case type when decisions were posted on the court system website. The Supreme Court’s implementation of the appeal by right in 2011, in which no appeal is denied and every appeal results in a decision on the merits, resulted in a dramatic rise in the number of decisions on the merits.

In each of those cases, the decisions posted on the Court’s website are identified using detailed case types that follow the national reporting guidelines. In addition, the annual reports prepared by the Clerk’s Office use the same detailed case types, allowing a better appreciation of the breadth of the Court’s workload.

“A well-grounded understanding of the caseload of the Supreme Court depends on the use of detailed case types. By using the national reporting guidelines, we are better able to manage the cases internally, and provide better clarity to the public, to lawyers, and to other interested parties who want to be informed about the work of the Court. I am grateful to the Court Statistics Project for their efforts in this area and honored to receive this award on behalf of the Court,” said Supreme Court Clerk Rory Perry.

“This award shows that West Virginia’s Supreme Court continues to be a national leader in court administration,” said Supreme Court Chief Justice Margaret Workman.

Administrative Director Steve Canterbury said, “Everybody knows that in the information age, data is the name of the game. I’m so proud some of the efforts that the

West Virginia Court has been making have been noticed by the pre-eminent national judicial organization. It's not surprising the Clerk's Office would be so recognized, given that Rory Perry is so nationally known."

Perry is a past president of the National Conference of Appellate Court Clerks and is a member of the Project Steering Committee for the National Center for State Courts Innovative Approaches to Expediting Case Resolution in Appellate Courts. He also has served and is serving as a reviewer for the Trends in State Courts publication that is issued annually by the NCSC.

The award was announced at the business meeting of the Conference of Chief Justices/Conference of State Court Administrators annual meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, in August. A framed certificate was mailed to the Supreme Court this week.

The award letter said, "The CSP recognizes states that embraced the challenge of improving data quality and comparability for 2013 reported data. Consistent and comparable data improve the management of our state courts and enhance the understanding of the work of the judicial branch."

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