

SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT SUMMARY

January 2026

The Sixteenth Judicial District encompasses all of Bent, Crowley, and Otero Counties with an estimated combined population of 29,370 (Bent – 5,779; Crowley – 5,600; and Otero – 17,991 according to 2024 U.S. Census Bureau data). The county seats are Las Animas, Ordway, and La Junta, respectively. Chief Judge for the 16th Judicial District is the Hon. Mark A. MacDonnell.

In 2025 there were 3,129 county court cases and 1,295 district court cases filed in the combined courts. The caseload is the responsibility of two full-time district court judges, one full-time magistrate, one part-time magistrate, one full-time county judge, and two part-time county court judges. The district court judges are responsible for handling felony criminal cases, juvenile matters (dependency and neglect and delinquency), probate proceedings, mental health cases, and civil filings that exceed the county court jurisdictional amount. The magistrates are responsible for handling domestic relation cases, child support, advisements, civil litigation, and some dependency and neglect cases. The county court judges are responsible for traffic, misdemeanor, small claims, evictions, civil cases within their jurisdiction, and may be appointed to handle district court matters as appropriate and assigned by the Chief Judge. All judicial officers in the district are responsible for warrants, protection orders, jail advisements, and on-call duties.

In calendar year 2025, the probation department supervised 358 new clients, a 10% increase over the prior year. Of the 358 clients, 57% (205) were district court cases and 43% (153) were county court cases. The probation department employs 18 employees as probation officers, collections investigators, support staff and administration. The main office for the probation department is in La Junta but they also staff satellite offices in Las Animas, Ordway and Rocky Ford.

In addition to the district judges and magistrates and county judges, there are 22 trial court employees and 12 positions. These positions include clerk of court, court supervisor, judicial clerk, protective proceedings monitor, family court facilitator, self-represented litigant coordinator, useful public service case manager, legal research attorney, administrative coordinator, competency court coordinator, peer training specialist, and court executive.

The district senior leadership team consists of the Chief Judge, Court Executive, and Chief Probation Officer. C.J. Montoya has served as Court Executive since February 10, 2020 and is the designated administrative authority for trial court operations under the Chief Judge. Court Executive responsibilities include day-to-day management of judicial officer and personnel matters, trial court and special program budgets and finances, county relations, security and facilities, and development and implementation of all district trial court policies. David Book has served as the Chief Probation Officer since April 17, 2023 and is the designated administrative authority for probation services under the Chief Judge. Chief Probation Officer responsibilities include the management of probation budgets, operations and personnel, implementation of policies to ensure compliance with all laws, rules, and probation standards, directs probation and victim services, county relations, security, and facilities.

The 16th Judicial District operates the useful public service program (UPS) for our three-county area. A part-time UPS case manager operates the program through the Otero Combined Court. In 2009 the 16th Judicial District started the Integrated Treatment Court (ITC) program.

Court participants are eligible high-risk defendants who receive a comprehensive and judicially-monitored program of drug treatment and other rehabilitation services. Also in 2009, the district started the MAP (Motivation, Achievement, Power) Truancy Court for students that habitually fail to attend public schools in the district.

In December of 2016 the Family Recovery Court (FRC) program was started. Family Recovery Court is a placement prevention program designed to provide intensive services to families with a dependency and neglect action related to an ongoing substance abuse or addiction problem. FRC is a multi-agency team approach that includes the Department of Human Services, treatment providers, probation staff, respondent parent counsel, law enforcement staff and the Court.

Case filings for the county courts in calendar year 2025 were as follows:

Bent County	798
Crowley County	347
Otero County	<u>1,984</u>
TOTAL	3,129

Case filings for the district courts in calendar year 2025 were as follows:

Bent County	246
Crowley County	275
Otero County	<u>774</u>
TOTAL	1,295

DISTRICT COURT

JUDGE/MAGISTRATE	DATE SWORN IN
Mark A. MacDonnell, Chief Judge	02/03/2013
Samuel S. Vigil, District Judge	08/01/2022
Rodney D. Fouracre, Magistrate	11/01/2021
Deni E. Eiring, Magistrate	10/24/2022

COUNTY COURT

JUDGE	COUNTY	DATE SWORN IN
William J. Culver	Otero	05/01/2024
Lance P. Clark	Bent	08/02/2022
Jeremy P. Boyce	Crowley	07/01/2023

For more information please contact C.J. Montoya, Court Executive, 13 W. 3rd Street, Room 207, La Junta, CO 81050, (719) 383-7123. Most court proceedings are open to the public and visits to all locations are encourage. The Court Executive would be happy to help you plan your visit.