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How Long Federal Civil Cases Take, by District: 2025 Edition

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ABSTRACT

All 94 federal district courts, read from the public U.S. Courts statistics for the year ending September 30, 2025: median time from filing to disposition, median time to trial, the share of civil cases pending more than three years, filings, judgeships and vacancy. The typical district disposes of a civil case in about eight months; the national median is roughly double that because a few districts carry very large multidistrict dockets. The report argues that aged inventory is the better forward signal for a funder, ranks the districts, compares the circuits and publishes the full table with sources.

IN ONE PARAGRAPH

The typical federal district disposes of a civil case in about eight months, while the national median is roughly double because a few districts carry very large consolidated dockets. Aged inventory, the share of pending cases older than three years, is the better forward signal for a funder pricing time. This report ranks all 94 districts, compares the circuits and publishes the full table with its public sources.

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WHO THIS IS FOR AND THE DECISION IT INFORMS

Reader. Funders, general counsel and litigation counsel who price, reserve or plan around the time a federal civil matter takes.

Decision. How much time to assume for a matter filed in a given federal district, and how much of the tail to carry.

Cost of getting it wrong. Time is the input that compounds. A matter underwritten at the national median in a district with a heavy aged docket can run years past plan, with the return falling every month it does.

01

Why the district a case is filed in matters to anyone pricing time

A funder who advances against a federal civil matter is buying time as much as outcome. The same multiple returned in two years and in five years are very different investments, as WP-003 works through. A general counsel setting a reserve needs to know when it will be released; outside counsel advising on strategy needs to know how long the court will take to reach the decisions that matter.

The district is the first thing that determines that clock. Every federal district works under the same rules, yet they process civil cases at very different speeds, because they differ in caseload, bench strength, vacancy and the kinds of cases they carry. This report reads all 94 districts from the public

U.S. Courts statistics for the year ending September 30, 2025, and sets out what a reader pricing time should take from them.

02

The national picture

MEASURE	VALUE	PERIOD
District courts	94	current
Civil filings, all districts	271,802	12-month period ending March 31, 2025
Pending civil cases, all districts	398,121	12-month period ending March 31, 2025
Authorized judgeships	677	12-month period ending September 30, 2025
Judgeship-months vacant	408	12-month period ending September 30, 2025
Civil cases pending over three years	122,733	12-month period ending September 30, 2025
National median, filing to disposition	15.6 months	12-month period ending September 30, 2025
Median of the 94 district medians	8.0 months	12-month period ending September 30, 2025
National share pending over three years	28.3%	12-month period ending September 30, 2025
Median district share pending over three years	9.4%	12-month period ending September 30, 2025

The most important line in the table is the gap between the national median and the typical district. The national median time from filing to disposition was 15.6 months. The median district disposed of its civil cases in 8.0 months, about half as long. 14 districts had a median under six months and only 8 had one over twelve.

The same gap appears in aged inventory. Nationally, 28.3% of pending civil cases had been pending more than three years.[2] In the median district the share was 9.4%, and 50 of 94 districts were under 10%. Five districts together held 69.6% of every aged civil case in the federal system.

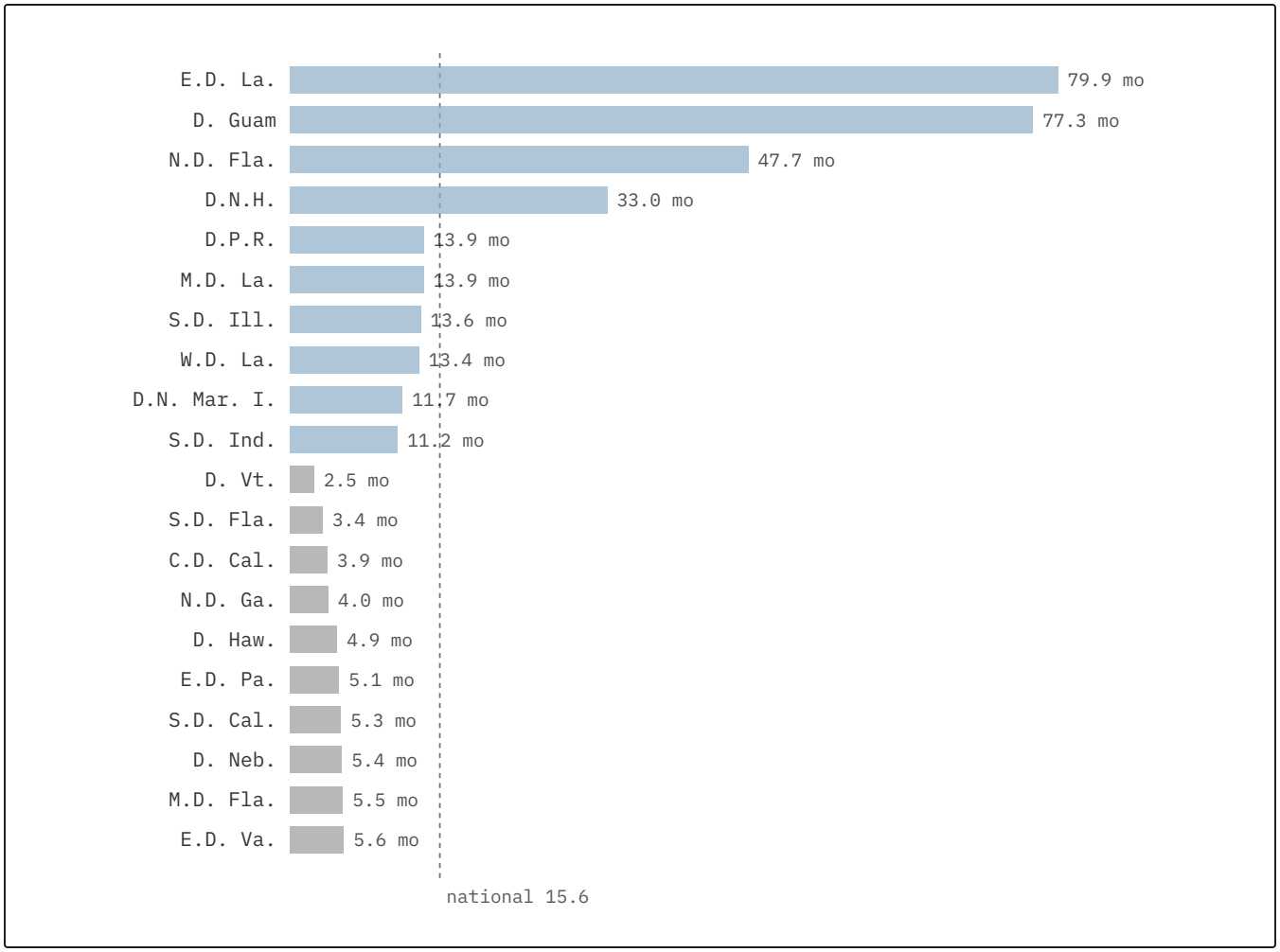
> The national figure describes a handful of very large dockets. The typical district is much faster.

The reason is concentration. A small number of districts host very large multidistrict litigation dockets, in which thousands of individual actions are consolidated before one judge and resolved together, often years after filing.[3] Those actions dominate national counts. A reader who applies the national median to a matter in an ordinary district will overestimate its duration; a reader who applies the typical district figure to a matter inside a large consolidated docket will underestimate it badly.

03

Districts ranked by median time to disposition

FIGURE 1 **The ten slowest and ten fastest districts**



Median months from filing to disposition of civil cases, 12-month period ending September 30, 2025. Upper block: the ten slowest districts. Lower block: the ten fastest. Dashed line: national median, 15.6 months. This figure is evidence of the spread among districts on the backward-looking measure.

Source: U.S. Courts, Federal Court Management Statistics, U.S. District Courts, District Profiles (12-month periods ending September 30, 2020 through 2025).

At the fast end, D. Vt. reported a median of 2.5 months and S.D. Fla. 3.4. Several large metropolitan districts sit near the fast end as well, which is a reminder that volume alone does not make a court slow: a district with a full bench and a docket dominated by quickly resolving case types can move a high volume fast.

At the slow end, the ranking needs careful reading. E.D. La. (79.9 months) and N.D. Fla. (47.7 months) top the list because each closed a large number of old consolidated cases during the year. A median of dispositions describes the cases that closed, so a year in which a court resolves a

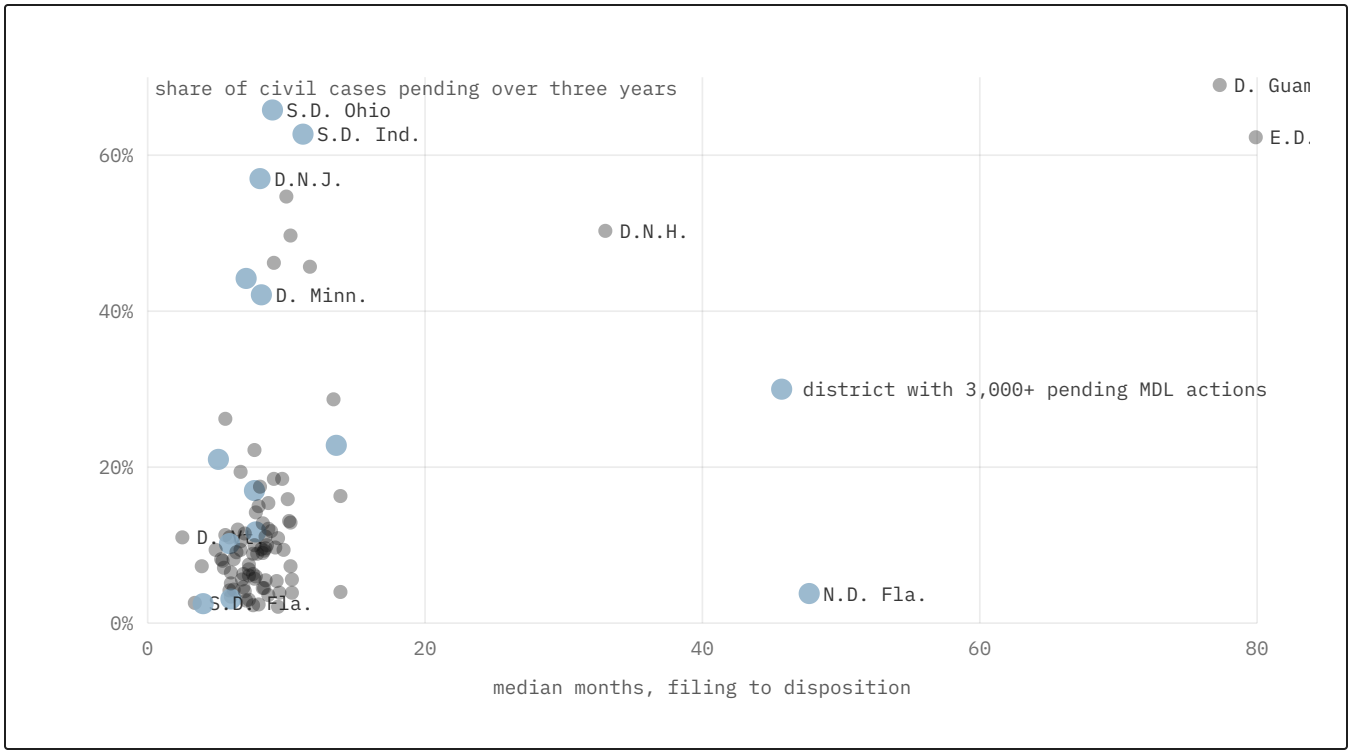
backlog of five-year-old cases produces a very long median even if new cases move quickly. That is why the next section treats aged inventory as the better guide to what a newly filed matter faces.

04

Aged inventory is the better forward signal

A median time to disposition looks backward: it measures cases that finished. The share of pending cases older than three years looks forward: it measures the queue a new filing joins. For a reader pricing the time a new or recent matter will take, the queue is what matters.

FIGURE 2 **Median time to disposition against aged share, all districts**



One dot per district. Highlighted dots are districts with more than 3,000 pending MDL actions. The two measures disagree most where consolidated dockets are large or have just been resolved. This figure is evidence that median time and aged inventory carry different information.

Source: U.S. Courts, Federal Court Management Statistics, U.S. District Courts, District Profiles (12-month periods ending September 30, 2020 through 2025); Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation, Pending MDL Dockets by District, report dated September 1, 2026. Medians above 80 months are drawn at the right edge.

The two measures disagree in instructive ways. N.D. Fla. reported a 47.7-month median but only 3.8% of its pending cases were over three years old: it had just cleared a backlog, and a new filing there faces a short queue. D.N.J. shows the opposite: a median of 8.1 months, which looks ordinary, alongside 57.0% of pending cases over three years old, 52,402 cases in all. S.D. Ohio is similar, at 9.0 months and 65.8%.

The practical rule follows. Use the median to describe how a district has been moving cases, and use the aged share to judge the tail a new matter carries. Where they disagree, find out why before relying on either: the answer is almost always a consolidated docket that is either building or being resolved.

05

Outliers, stated plainly

Districts carrying large consolidated dockets

The largest concentrations of pending MDL actions sit in D.N.J. (84,917), S.D. Ohio (23,323) and a handful of others.[3] Those districts dominate the national aged count. For a matter that is part of such a docket, the district's figures describe the docket, and the relevant clock is the consolidated proceeding's own schedule. For a matter filed in the same district outside it, the district's overall figures overstate the wait. The MDL tracker lists every pending docket.

Small and territorial courts

D. Guam reported a 77.3-month median and 69.0% aged share on 284 pending cases and one authorized judgeship. In courts this small, a few long-running matters move every statistic, and figures should be read as descriptions of a handful of cases rather than as rates. D.N.H., at 33.0 months and 50.3% aged on 1,229 pending cases with three judgeships, is a similar case.

Vacancy

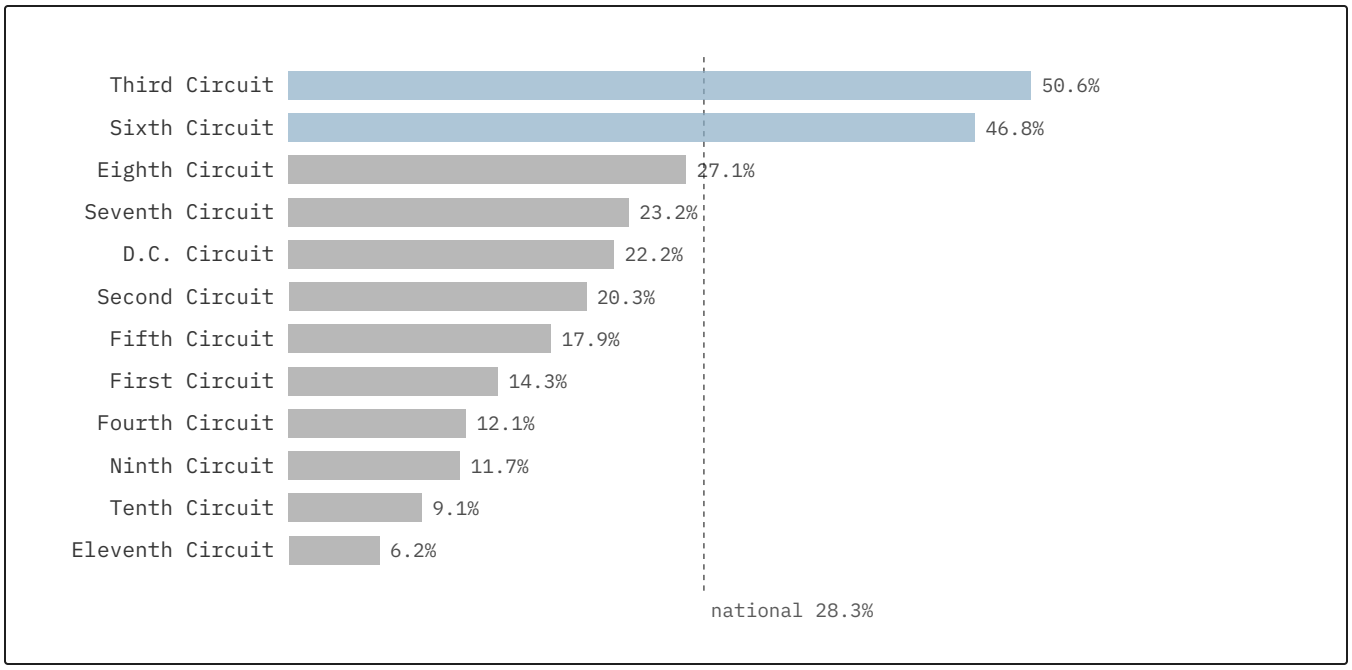
Judgeship-months vacant measure lost bench capacity over the year. The federal system recorded 408 vacant judgeship-months in the period. Vacancy is a leading indicator: a district carrying long

vacancies is likely to slow before its median shows it. Where a district's vacancy is high relative to its bench, a reader should lengthen the tail assumption even if its median is ordinary today.

06

Circuits compared

FIGURE 3 **Share of civil cases pending over three years, by circuit**



Aggregated from each district's published count and share. Highlighted bars are circuits above the national share. This figure is evidence that circuit differences sit in aged inventory, not in the typical district.

Source: U.S. Courts, Federal Court Management Statistics, U.S. District Courts, District Profiles (12-month periods ending September 30, 2020 through 2025).

CIRCUIT	DISTRICTS	MEDIAN OF DISTRICT MEDIANS (MO)	AGED SHARE	PENDING CIVIL	P
Third Circuit	6	8.3	50.6%	99,372	
Sixth Circuit	9	8.3	46.8%	45,722	
Eighth Circuit	10	8.1	27.1%	18,285	
Seventh Circuit	7	7.3	23.2%	45,170	
D.C. Circuit	1	7.7	22.2%	5,243	
Second Circuit	6	6.8	20.3%	29,955	
Fifth Circuit	9	7.7	17.9%	37,129	
First Circuit	5	8.9	14.3%	8,155	
Fourth Circuit	9	8.3	12.1%	29,614	
Ninth Circuit	15	8.0	11.7%	47,681	
Tenth Circuit	8	7.8	9.1%	9,928	
Eleventh Circuit	9	7.6	6.2%	21,867	

Measured by the typical district, the circuits are close: every circuit's median district disposes of civil cases in roughly seven to nine months. Measured by aged inventory, they are far apart, from 6.2% in the Eleventh Circuit to 50.6% in the Third Circuit. The difference is almost entirely consolidated litigation, which is why circuit averages should not be used to price an individual matter without looking at its district and whether it sits inside a consolidated docket.

07

Time to trial

Few federal civil cases reach trial, and for those that do the wait is long. Among the 51 districts that report a median time from filing to civil trial,[4] the median district's figure was 34.6 months. The range ran from 15.6 months in E.D. Va. to 66.8 months in E.D. Cal..

For a funder, the trial median is the clock that applies if a matter does not resolve earlier. It belongs in the tail of a duration assumption, not the middle. A matter whose economics only work if it settles well before trial should be stressed against this figure for its district.

08

What a funder should do with this

1. Start from the district, not the national figure. The national median is roughly double the typical district.
2. Check the aged share. Where it is high, carry a longer tail even if the median looks ordinary.
3. Ask whether the matter sits inside a consolidated docket. If it does, the docket's own schedule is the clock.
4. Discount small-court statistics. Where pending cases number in the hundreds, read the figures as a few cases, not a rate.
5. Watch vacancy. Long vacancies slow a court before its median moves.
6. Stress against the trial median for the district, and size so the position survives it.
7. Then read the matter itself. A district describes the environment; a matter-level band, by case type and stage, describes the matter.

The interactive companion to this report, the Duration Explorer, lets a reader filter and compare districts directly: federal duration explorer. Each district also has its own page under federal

jurisdictions, and the duration metrics used to price the tail are defined in WP-001.

09

Full table and sources

All 94 districts, grouped by circuit. Filings and pending: 12-month period ending March 31, 2025. All other court figures: 12-month period ending September 30, 2025. Pending MDL actions: report dated September 1, 2026. A dash means the figure is not published for that district in the period.

DISTRICT	CIRCUIT	FILINGS	PENDING	JUDGESHIPS	MEDIAN TO DISPOSITION (MO)	MEI
D.D.C.	D.C.	3,673	5,243	15	7.7	
D. Minn.	Eighth	4,717	10,578	7	8.2	
D. Neb.	Eighth	885	1,008	3	5.4	
D.N.D.	Eighth	282	280	2	8.7	
D.S.D.	Eighth	365	438	3	10.2	
E.D. Ark.	Eighth	1,657	1,616	5	10.4	
E.D. Mo.	Eighth	1,967	1,571	8	6.0	
N.D. Iowa	Eighth	401	335	2	7.1	
S.D. Iowa	Eighth	578	436	3	8.0	
W.D. Ark.	Eighth	867	738	3	9.5	
W.D. Mo.	Eighth	1,696	1,285	6	6.7	
M.D. Ala.	Eleventh	924	982	3	7.8	
M.D. Fla.	Eleventh	8,931	6,107	15	5.5	
M.D. Ga.	Eleventh	1,302	1,086	4	6.4	
N.D. Ala.	Eleventh	1,930	2,210	8	8.7	
N.D. Fla.	Eleventh	2,112	1,558	4	47.7	
N.D. Ga.	Eleventh	7,345	4,676	11	4.0	
S.D. Ala.	Eleventh	516	544	3	10.4	
S.D. Fla.	Eleventh	9,029	3,847	18	3.4	
S.D. Ga.	Eleventh	1,068	857	3	7.6	
E.D. La.	Fifth	2,087	9,924	12	79.9	
E.D. Tex.	Fifth	3,923	3,938	8	7.3	

DISTRICT	CIRCUIT	FILINGS	PENDING	JUDGESHIPS	MEDIAN TO DISPOSITION (MO)	MEI
M.D. La.	Fifth	1,074	1,352	3	13.9	
N.D. Miss.	Fifth	783	549	3	7.3	
N.D. Tex.	Fifth	5,785	4,200	12	5.9	
S.D. Miss.	Fifth	1,625	3,656	6	9.4	
S.D. Tex.	Fifth	7,070	6,576	19	7.6	
W.D. La.	Fifth	1,824	2,605	7	13.4	
W.D. Tex.	Fifth	4,729	4,329	13	7.7	
D. Mass.	First	3,519	4,902	13	7.3	
D. Me.	First	468	382	3	6.2	
D.N.H.	First	424	1,229	3	33.0	
D.P.R.	First	638	984	7	13.9	
D.R.I.	First	562	658	3	8.9	
D. Md.	Fourth	4,070	3,840	10	6.7	
D.S.C.	Fourth	7,847	12,394	10	7.8	
E.D. Va.	Fourth	4,121	3,141	11	5.6	
E.D.N.C.	Fourth	2,941	4,561	4	8.3	
M.D.N.C.	Fourth	1,093	900	4	8.4	
N.D.W. Va.	Fourth	608	505	3	10.3	
S.D.W. Va.	Fourth	840	1,992	5	10.0	
W.D. Va.	Fourth	1,379	1,169	4	9.2	
W.D.N.C.	Fourth	1,495	1,112	5	5.9	

DISTRICT	CIRCUIT	FILINGS	PENDING	JUDGESHIPS	MEDIAN TO DISPOSITION (MO)	MEI
C.D. Cal.	Ninth	16,625	10,720	28	3.9	
D. Alaska	Ninth	347	424	3	10.1	
D. Ariz.	Ninth	5,041	4,404	13	6.0	
D. Guam	Ninth	38	284	1	77.3	
D. Haw.	Ninth	635	454	4	4.9	
D. Idaho	Ninth	663	806	2	10.3	
D. Mont.	Ninth	787	677	3	9.4	
D. Nev.	Ninth	2,938	3,473	7	8.0	
D. Or.	Ninth	2,148	2,229	6	9.8	
D.N. Mar. I.	Ninth	13	43	1	11.7	
E.D. Cal.	Ninth	5,250	5,941	6	8.1	
E.D. Wash.	Ninth	831	659	4	6.2	
N.D. Cal.	Ninth	10,235	12,824	14	7.7	
S.D. Cal.	Ninth	2,774	2,158	13	5.3	
W.D. Wash.	Ninth	3,316	2,585	7	6.0	
D. Conn.	Second	2,112	2,046	8	6.9	
D. Vt.	Second	1,537	570	2	2.5	
E.D.N.Y.	Second	8,334	10,455	15	6.7	
N.D.N.Y.	Second	1,754	1,749	5	8.4	
S.D.N.Y.	Second	10,238	12,508	28	5.6	
W.D.N.Y.	Second	2,084	2,627	4	9.1	

DISTRICT	CIRCUIT	FILINGS	PENDING	JUDGESHIPS	MEDIAN TO DISPOSITION (MO)	MEI
C.D. Ill.	Seventh	1,525	1,521	4	7.3	
E.D. Wis.	Seventh	1,806	1,608	5	6.0	
N.D. Ill.	Seventh	14,744	21,260	22	5.9	
N.D. Ind.	Seventh	2,161	2,133	5	8.5	
S.D. Ill.	Seventh	2,212	7,403	4	13.6	
S.D. Ind.	Seventh	3,574	10,272	5	11.2	
W.D. Wis.	Seventh	996	973	2	6.9	
E.D. Ky.	Sixth	1,066	1,004	5.5	8.3	
E.D. Mich.	Sixth	3,566	3,890	15	8.3	
E.D. Tenn.	Sixth	1,122	1,104	5	9.3	
M.D. Tenn.	Sixth	1,745	1,839	4	8.7	
N.D. Ohio	Sixth	3,849	6,756	11	7.1	
S.D. Ohio	Sixth	4,210	26,964	8	9.0	
W.D. Ky.	Sixth	1,196	1,179	4.5	7.9	
W.D. Mich.	Sixth	1,670	1,196	4	7.6	
W.D. Tenn.	Sixth	1,494	1,790	5	8.6	
D. Colo.	Tenth	3,792	3,318	7	7.7	
D. Kan.	Tenth	1,299	959	6	7.0	
D. Utah	Tenth	1,256	1,496	5	8.5	
D. Wyo.	Tenth	298	501	3	9.1	

DISTRICT	CIRCUIT	FILINGS	PENDING	JUDGESHIPS	MEDIAN TO DISPOSITION (MO)	MEI
D.N.M.	Tenth	1,309	1,355	7	8.2	
E.D. Okla.	Tenth	489	505	1.5	7.8	
N.D. Okla.	Tenth	648	638	3.5	7.0	
W.D. Okla.	Tenth	1,453	1,156	6	6.8	
D. Del.	Third	1,464	2,075	4	9.7	
D.N.J.	Third	11,546	82,874	17	8.1	
D.V.I.	Third	124	329	2	10.3	
E.D. Pa.	Third	9,192	8,687	22	5.1	
M.D. Pa.	Third	2,393	2,407	6	8.5	
W.D. Pa.	Third	2,753	3,000	10	6.5	

Sources

- U.S. Courts, Federal Court Management Statistics, U.S. District Courts, District Profiles (12-month periods ending September 30, 2020 through 2025), 12-month period ending September 30, 2025.
- U.S. Courts, Table C-1, U.S. District Courts, Civil Cases Commenced, Terminated, and Pending, 12-month period ending March 31, 2025.
- Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation, Pending MDL Dockets by District, report dated September 1, 2026.

The compiled dataset is published under the site terms and may be cited as DR-003. Next edition: after U.S. Courts publishes the statistics for the year ending September 30, 2026.

The question, as the reader has it

A funder sizing a position, a general counsel setting a reserve release date and a litigation team planning a budget all need one thing from a federal docket before anything about the matter itself: how long does a civil case wait here? The decision is a duration assumption, and a single national number is a poor way to state one. It averages over districts that behave very differently, and it averages over a few very large consolidated dockets that do not describe the typical filing. A point estimate for the nation answers a question no one is asking.

The reader's problem is to separate the environment a matter is filed into from the matter. This report describes the environment, district by district, in the court's own published terms, so that a matter-level duration band can then be read against it.

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What is measured

QUANTITY	UNIT	POPULATION
Median time, filing to disposition	Months	US federal civil cases a district terminated in the 12-month period
Median time, filing to trial	Months	Civil cases that reached trial, published only where the district had enough
Civil cases pending over three years	Count and share of pending civil cases	US federal civil cases pending at the end of the period
Filings, pending cases	Count	US federal civil cases commenced and pending in the 12-month period
Judgeships and vacancy	Authorized judgeships; judgeship-months vacant	Each district bench over the period
Pending MDL actions	Count by transferee district	Actions consolidated in pending multidistrict dockets on the report date

Inclusion is the court's own: a case enters a median when its record shows a termination in the period, so the median describes cases that closed. A case still pending is counted only in the pending and aged-inventory measures. That difference is the reason the report reads the two together: a median of terminated cases looks backward, and the pending queue looks forward.

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How a number travels from the record to the table

1. **Record to published statistic.** The court system compiles its own case records into district profiles and tables. This report starts from those published statistics, not from case-level data.
2. **Statistic to table.** Each district's published values are placed side by side. National, circuit and district-median figures are aggregated on one stated basis: counts are summed, and shares are re-derived as total aged cases over the total implied by each district's own percentage.
3. **Table to matter-level band.** The district figures feed a matter-level duration estimate as context. That estimate belongs to a different class of method: survival analysis in the Kaplan-Meier and proportional-hazards tradition, which uses matters that are still open, with the district entered as a group in a hierarchical model so a thin district borrows strength from its circuit in proportion to how little data it has.

No step in this report produces a model output. The figures are published statistics or counts and shares derived directly from them. The third step is named so that a reader can see where a district median stops and a matter-level band begins.

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Validation design

A descriptive report is validated by reconciliation. What is frozen is the published source and its period. What is compared is each aggregate against the figure the source publishes for the same quantity: the national share pending over three years computed from the district rows is checked against the published national rate, and the two agree. What prevents error is that no figure is

typed by hand: every number on the page is computed from the same data file that produces the table.

The claim that aged inventory is the better forward signal is a testable one, and a reader can test it with the series the report cites: take a district's aged share at the end of one year, take the median time to disposition in the next, and compare. That is an out-of-time design, with the earlier year frozen and the later year held out. The metric family is rank agreement between the two measures across districts. Figure 1 is evidence of the spread among districts on the backward-looking measure. Figure 2 is evidence that the backward-looking and forward-looking measures disagree where consolidated dockets are building or clearing. Figure 3 is evidence that the circuit differences are concentrated in aged inventory.

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Scope and precision

A district median describes all civil cases the district closed, across every case type. It states the environment; a single matter's duration depends on its case type, stage and facts, and a matter-level band is the estimate for that. The report states durations and counts. It does not state outcomes, values or who prevails.

- Data lag: the statistics cover periods that have closed, and the filings and pending counts come from a period that overlaps but is not identical to the others.
- Censoring: pending cases are not terminated cases, so the medians describe what closed and the aged share describes what is still waiting.
- Small courts: where a district has few pending cases, a few matters move every statistic and the figures describe cases rather than rates.

15

What a reader can reproduce

Everything in this report can be reproduced from public sources. The three source series are cited with their periods and addresses in section 9. The full table of all 94 districts is printed on this page, and the national, circuit and median-of-district figures can be recomputed from it with a spreadsheet using the aggregation basis stated in the notes. The compiled dataset is published under the site terms and may be cited as DR-003. A matter-level duration band for a particular filing is the one thing here that requires the platform, because it depends on the case type, stage and record version stated with it.

What this number means

Every figure in this report is a published court statistic or a count derived directly from one, for the periods stated beside it; none is a Criterica model output. A district median describes all civil cases the district closed in the year, across every case type, and a single matter's duration depends on its case type, stage and facts as well as its venue. Read the district figures as the environment a matter is filed into, and a matter-level duration band as the estimate for the matter itself.

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NOTES

1. Filings and pending counts are from U.S. Courts, Table C-1, U.S. District Courts, Civil Cases Commenced, Terminated, and Pending, 12-month period ending March 31, 2025. Medians, aged counts, judgeships and vacancy are from U.S. Courts, Federal Court Management Statistics, U.S. District Courts, District Profiles (12-month periods ending September 30, 2020 through 2025), 12-month period ending September 30, 2025. The two periods overlap but are not identical, so ratios that mix them are approximate.
2. The aged share is published by U.S. Courts as a count and a percentage of that district's pending civil cases. National and circuit shares in this report are aggregated on the same basis: total aged cases divided by the total implied by each district's own percentage. The national result, 28.4%, agrees with the published national rate of 28.3%.
3. Pending MDL actions are from the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation, Pending MDL Dockets by District, report dated September 1, 2026, summed by transferee district. They are later than the court statistics and are used here only to identify which districts carry large consolidated dockets.
4. Median time to trial is published only where a district had enough civil trials in the period; 51 of 94 districts report it.

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