



## Clerks of Court Generally Are Meeting the System's Collections Performance Standards

### *at a glance*

Fines, fees, service charges, and court costs are important sources of revenue that help fund the state courts system. Judges are responsible for assessing and enforcing these obligations and court clerks are responsible for collecting them. In Fiscal Year 2005-06, clerks of court remitted \$93.7 million in court-related collections to the state after funding their own operations. These funds offset 23% of the \$405.4 million cost of the state courts system for that year.

Statewide, collection rates are generally high and clerks generally meet or exceed performance standards, although civil traffic and juvenile delinquency collections pose difficulties.

The Clerks of Court Operations Corporation should consider modifying the collection standard for the juvenile delinquency division as collections are small, thereby allowing clerks to target their resources toward divisions where defendants are more likely to be able to pay.

In keeping with its technical assistance mandate, the corporation should identify best practices for using collection methods that maximize collections.

### Scope

As directed by the Legislature, OPPAGA addressed two main questions concerning clerk of court collections of court fines and fees.

- How well are clerks collecting court fines and fees?
- Which collection methods are clerks using to collect fines and fees?

### Background

Article V of the Florida Constitution establishes the judicial branch of state government. In 1998, voters approved Revision 7 to Article V, which allocated more costs to the state, effective July 1, 2004. To implement this constitutional revision, the Legislature enacted laws that direct the state to pay for certain enumerated elements of the state courts system and require the 67 county clerks of court to fund their offices using revenues derived from fines, fees, service charges and court costs assessed in both civil and criminal proceedings.<sup>1</sup> Except under certain conditions, one-third of these funds are transmitted to the state to help fund the operation of the state courts system. In Fiscal Year 2005-06, clerks of court remitted \$93.7 million in court-related collections to the state after funding their own operations.<sup>2</sup> These funds offset 23% of the \$405.4 million cost of the state courts system during that year.

<sup>1</sup> Chapters 2000-237, 2003-402, and 2004-265, *Laws of Florida*.

<sup>2</sup> This includes a \$16 million transfer to general revenue from the Clerks of the Court Trust Fund in October 2006 which included collections for the second half of Fiscal Year 2005-06.

To ensure accountability for these revenues, the Legislature created the Clerks of Court Operations Corporation via Section 28.35, *Florida Statutes*. The corporation’s functions include

- establishing a process for reviewing and certifying proposed court-related budgets submitted by each clerk;
- developing and certifying a uniform system of performance measures and applicable performance standards;
- identifying deficiencies and corrective action plans when clerks fail to meet performance standards; and
- recommending to the Legislature changes in the various court-related fines, fees, service charges and court costs established by law to ensure reasonable and adequate funding of the clerks of court in the performance of their court-related functions.

Although assessment of court fines, fees, service charges and court costs occurs at the time of sentencing, collection of these funds may happen over time. To measure collections, the corporation has developed a uniform data reporting process. Clerks must report aggregate collection totals by court division on a quarterly basis to the corporation.<sup>3</sup> Because collection rates vary based on the type of case (e.g., civil or criminal) and whether the offender is incarcerated, the corporation has adopted performance standards for nine court divisions, as shown in Exhibit 1.

The corporation adopted these standards based on recommendations from the Article V Steering Committee, members of which were appointed by leadership of the Florida Association of Court Clerks and Comptrollers. The committee developed standards using reports from the Auditor General, as well as input from clerks with experience using collection courts and collection agencies.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Assessments are tracked during the quarter in which they are newly assessed, and for four quarters afterward. The extra quarter is used to ensure that assessments made during the last day of the cohort quarter receive a full four-quarter’s worth of follow-up. Technically each assessment is supposed to be tracked for exactly 365 days, but in practice assessments made on the first day of the cohort quarter could theoretically be getting almost three extra months of follow-up.

<sup>4</sup> Auditor General Report Nos. 11757, 11780, and 11823.

## Questions and Answers —

### *How well are clerks collecting court fines and fees?*

Statewide, clerks have generally met the collections performance standards, although juvenile delinquency and civil traffic collections pose difficulties.

Collection rates generally met or exceeded performance standards. Statewide, clerks collected 71% of assessed court fines, fees, service charges and court costs. As shown in Exhibit 1, the average statewide collection rates met or exceeded the standards for seven of the nine court divisions, with the exception of juvenile delinquency and civil traffic.<sup>5</sup>

**Exhibit 1  
Statewide Percentage of Assessments Collected for Most Divisions Exceed Standards**

Division	Amount Assessed During Quarter	Performance Standard	Percentage Collected Statewide
Circuit Civil	\$ 71,968,862	90%	99%
County Civil	19,629,132	90%	99%
Probate	5,656,396	90%	98%
Family	11,361,643	75%	97%
Civil Traffic	100,378,084	90%	85%
Criminal Traffic	29,934,228	40%	72%
County Criminal	23,527,083	40%	50%
Juvenile Delinquency	2,648,038	40%	27%
Circuit Criminal	60,838,107	9%	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$325,941,573</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>71%</b>

Source: OPPAGA analysis of data from the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation.

Similarly, high percentages of clerks have met the collection performance standards for seven of the court divisions (see Exhibit 2). However, less than half of the clerks met the collections standards for two court divisions—juvenile delinquency and civil traffic.

<sup>5</sup> To assess clerks’ performance in collecting fines, fees, service charges and court costs we examined the first full year of follow-up collection data from the first three-month cohort. The first full year’s worth of data covers the second quarter of calendar year 2005, followed for one year through the third quarter of calendar year 2006.

**Exhibit 2  
Most Clerks Met Most Performance Standards**

Division	Percentage of Clerks Meeting the Standard
County Civil	99%
Probate	94%
Criminal Traffic	91%
Circuit Civil	88%
Family	85%
County Criminal	82%
Circuit Criminal	79%
Juvenile Delinquency	43%
Civil Traffic	37%

Note: nine clerks did not submit data that could be used to determine whether they met the standard for the year in one or more division.  
Source: OPPAGA analysis of CCOC data.

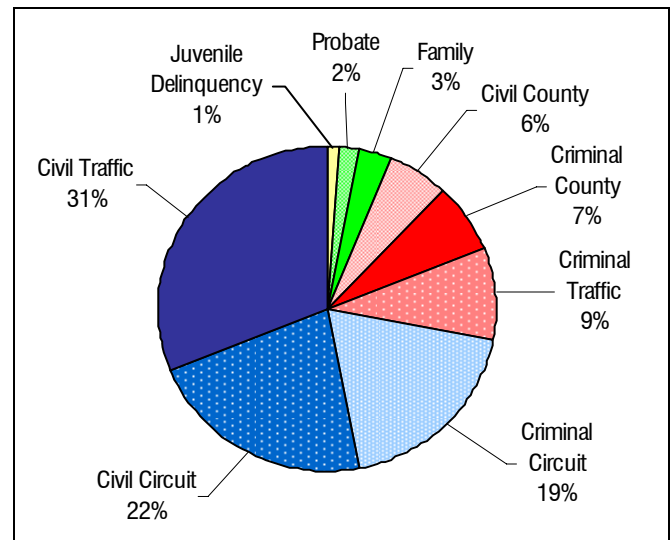
Juvenile delinquency and civil traffic collections pose difficulties but could be improved. Clerks reported that the juvenile delinquency standard of 40% was difficult for them to meet because clerks cannot enforce collection from defendants' guardians, and juvenile defendants often have limited means to pay the assessments themselves. These children may be sentenced to lengthy stays in secure detention or a residential treatment program, and many are under 16 years old, which makes earning money to pay their court costs difficult due to child labor restrictions even if they were not incarcerated. Statewide, judges assessed \$2,648,038 in juvenile fines, fees, service charges and court costs during the quarter. In the year following these assessments, clerks collected \$720,975 (27%) of these court assessments.

The corporation should consider modifying the collection standard for this division. Given the relatively small amounts assessed (less than 1% of the statewide total, as shown in Exhibit 3) and the difficulty in collecting these funds, devoting greater resources to collecting juvenile delinquency assessments may not be the most cost-effective use of clerk resources. Modifying the performance standard could allow clerks to target their resources toward divisions where greater assessments are levied and defendants are more likely to be able to pay.

Only 37% of the clerks met the performance standard of 90% for collecting civil traffic assessments. Clerks reported that this standard was difficult to meet because large numbers of

people from outside their jurisdiction receive tickets but refuse to pay. For example, clerks explained that drivers cited for speeding along the I-75 corridor who are not county (or state) residents often do not pay their fines. Of the 15 clerks who fell below the statewide average for collections in this standard, all but two (Dixie and Liberty) have at least one interstate highway within their counties. Under Section 322.23(2), *Florida Statutes*, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles is authorized to notify the motor vehicle administrator of any other state whenever an out-of-state driver is convicted of a violation of Florida's motor vehicle laws.

**Exhibit 3  
Civil Traffic Accounts for the Largest Proportion of Assessments**



Source: OPPAGA analysis of CCOC data.

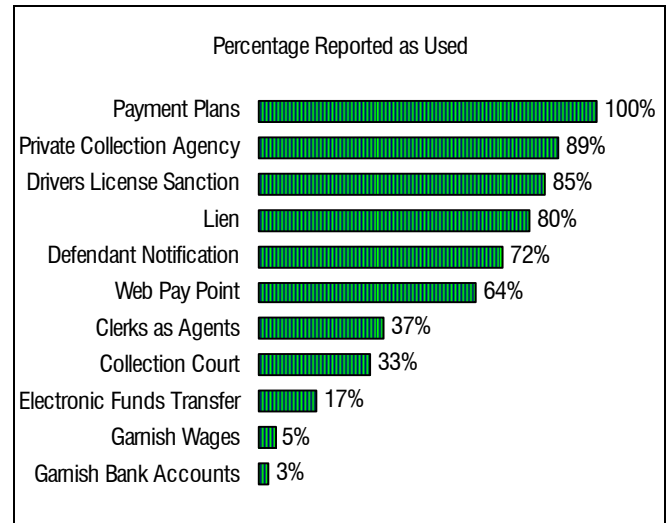
As shown in Exhibit 3, civil traffic accounts for the largest proportion of assessments, 31%, and unpaid assessments totaled \$15,532,684 after a year following the quarter in which they were assessed. Therefore, increased collection of traffic fines could lead to a significant increase in local and state revenue. For example, if clerks increased collections from the current 85% to the standard of 90% statewide, the state would receive an additional \$5,494,876 in these revenues to help fund the state courts system.

**Which collection methods are clerks using to collect fines and fees?**

Clerks use a combination of collections methods to maximize collections. As shown in Exhibit 4, all clerks use payment plans that allow individuals to pay fines and fees over time, and most impose driver license sanctions or liens. Almost 9 out of 10 clerks also use private collection agencies to help recover assessments. However, there are five collections methods that less than half of the clerks use.<sup>6</sup>

- Clerks as collection agents - uses existing clerk resources to send collection letters directly to defendants rather than using private agents, who can impose an additional fee of 40% that the clerks are not allowed to impose (37 clerks not using).
- Collection courts - hold defendants accountable to the court—if a defendant pays his or her fines and fees according to the agreed-upon terms, the case is closed; if a defendant fails to pay, he or she must appear before a judge to explain why or risk issuance of a warrant for the failure to appear (41 clerks not using).
- Electronic fund transfer - involves obtaining defendants’ permission to automatically debit their accounts on a scheduled basis (49 clerks not using).
- Garnishing wages or bank accounts is a legal device used by a creditor to take a debtor’s property that is held by a third person, or money owed to the debtor from a third person, and use it to pay the debt to the creditor (56 and 56 clerks not using, respectively).

**Exhibit 4  
Varying Percentages of Clerks Use Available Collection Methods**



Note: Percentages reported as used are based on clerks who responded to the question and exclude missing cases. Not all respondents answered each question.  
Source: OPPAGA survey of clerks of court.

Collection methods are difficult to link to performance results. We surveyed the 67 clerks about their use and perceptions of the effectiveness of various collection methods, and compared collection rates of the clerks to the specific techniques they used. As shown in Exhibit 5, there was no meaningful difference between the average percentage of revenue collected overall and clerks’ use of any particular method. While there may be collection methods that improve collections for specific divisions; our survey data did not link specific methods to division collection success.

However, as shown in Appendix B, there was considerable variability among the clerks in terms of the proportion of assessments they were able to collect. Overall, collections rates among clerks who reported data on all court divisions ranged from a low of 36% to a high of 90%. These differences are the result of a variety of factors including collection techniques and population demographics of their counties such as the median per capita income, degree of urbanization, population size, and other factors outside clerks’ control.

<sup>6</sup> We surveyed the 67 clerks of court regarding the collections methods clerks use and the effectiveness of various collection methods. We received responses from 63 clerks. Clerks of Broward, Dixie, Glades, and Hendry counties did not respond to our survey.

**Exhibit 5**  
**Little Difference in Collection Rates of Clerks Who Use and Do Not Use Specific Payment Methods Examined**

Method	Average Collected Among	
	Users	Non-Users
Payment Plans	73%	NA
Private Collection Agency	73%	74%
Driver License Sanction	72%	78%
Lien	71%	79%
Defendant Notification	72%	75%
Web Pay Point	73%	74%
Clerks as Agents	74%	73%
Collection Court	75%	72%
Electronic Funds Transfer	73%	73%
Garnish Wages	75%	73%
Garnish Bank Account	73%	73%

Source: OPPAGA analysis of CCOC data, and OPPAGA survey of clerks of court.

The corporation should identify best practices that maximize collections. Given the limited information collected by our survey, we were unable to determine whether specific collection techniques could help improve payment rates for specific court divisions. As part of its responsibility to identify deficiencies and corrective action plans when clerks fail to meet performance standards, the corporation should do an in-depth analysis to identify and recommend collection techniques that are appropriate and likely to be effective.

The Florida Association of Court Clerks and Comptrollers has developed what it considers to be best practices related to the collection of fines and fees when using payment plans.<sup>7</sup> These include

- creating separate payment plan models for criminal and civil court;
- ensuring that payment plans are flexible, and are based on defendants’ circumstances;
- developing and implementing appropriate enforcement tools, including collections court and collections agents;

- imposing civil judgment at sentencing for defendants deemed unable to pay, rather than attempting to collect from them thereby wasting time and resources that could be more effectively used elsewhere; and
- using an accounts receivable system with aging data to track amounts owed over time and whether defendants are making payments on their account.

The clerks who were successfully meeting the performance standards had already implemented some of the best practices recommended by the association. These clerks tended to have several years experience in the job and to have accountants on staff. In addition, they generally

- apply sanctions with defendants who fail to pay, including the threat of incarceration and suspension of driving privileges;
- use a wide variety of collection methods and offer flexibility in payment options; and
- deduct fines, fees, service charges and costs from any cash bond posted before returning the balance to the defendant.

We also interviewed several clerks who were struggling with meeting performance standards. These clerks tended to

- not apply the threat of suspension of driving privileges to enforce collection in all case divisions;
- use a limited number of collection methods;
- not use credit cards for collection in divisions other than civil traffic;
- rely heavily upon probation officers to collect from probationers;
- not use collection agents for all divisions in smaller, more rural counties; and
- have programming problems with their database of assessments and collections, which hindered their ability to collect and accurately report to the corporation.

The corporation should follow up on the work of the association and OPPAGA, given the data it has at its disposal and its mandate to provide technical assistance to struggling clerks, and identify and recommend collection techniques that are appropriate and likely to be effective.

<sup>7</sup> [Proposed Best Practices Policy: Payment Plans for the Collection of Court Fines, Fees, and Service Charges](#), Florida Association of Court Clerks and Comptrollers, 2005. The association has not linked the use of these best practices to improved collection performance; clerk performance is under the purview of the corporation.

## Recommendations

To increase collections and funding for the state court system,

- we recommend that the corporation identify what collection methods work best, under what conditions, and in what combinations. Given the large amount of potential funds that can be collected to help fund the state courts system, the corporation should initially focus on helping clerks identify options for improving civil traffic collections. The corporation should report its findings to the clerks and develop technical assistance programs to help ensure successful implementation.

To more effectively target collection efforts,

- we recommend that the corporation consider modifying the juvenile delinquency performance standard, which could enable clerks to concentrate their efforts on activities that can produce the highest return on investment of collections resources.

## Agency Response

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.51(5), *Florida Statutes*, a draft of our report was submitted to the executive council chairperson of the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation to review and respond. The chairperson's written response has been reproduced in Appendix C.

## Appendix A

# Clerk Collections by Divisions

Each clerk must report data on collections to the corporation on a quarterly basis. This data is used to evaluate clerk performance in each of the nine divisions. Collections are tracked for four full quarters following the quarter in which they were originally assessed, as shown in the table below.

County	All Divisions			Percentage Collected by Criminal Division				Percentage Collected by Civil Division				
	Total Assessed	Total Collected	Percentage Collected	Circuit	County	Juvenile Delinquency	Traffic	Circuit	County	Traffic	Probate	Family
Alachua	\$ 4,221,638	\$ 3,204,163	76%	9%	43%	35%	67%	96%	100%	94%	99%	90%
Baker	378,088	282,241	75%	30%	69%	58%	77%	100%	100%	79%	100%	100%
Bay	3,389,601	2,077,093	61%	5%	55%	31%	49%	100%	95%	87%	100%	97%
Bradford	506,715	436,456	86%	21%	53%	61%	84%	100%	100%	90%	100%	100%
Brevard	8,038,410	5,589,394	70%	13%	50%	25%	61%	99%	99%	90%	98%	92%
Broward	22,177,735	17,941,390	81%	14%	74%	10%	76%	100%	100%	89%	100%	100%
Calhoun	197,425	133,793	68%	32%	52%	34%	79%	100%	100%	86%	86%	93%
Charlotte	1,997,297	1,289,434	65%	8%	56%	70%	76%	100%	100%	88%	100%	100%
Citrus	1,644,216	1,208,197	73%	16%	67%	79%	70%	100%	100%	93%	100%	97%
Clay	1,959,741	1,466,385	75%	27%	44%	84%	62%	81%	101%	86%	99%	98%
Collier	6,110,044	4,432,607	73%	10%	61%	42%	80%	99%	100%	92%	100%	99%
Columbia	1,294,636	681,698	53%	14%	30%	51%	---1	100%	100%	89%	100%	95%
Dade	30,029,090	22,231,761	74%	10%	25%	30%	59%	100%	100%	86%	95%	97%
DeSoto	69,857	62,596	90%	---1	---1	---1	---1	84%	100%	---1	100%	84%
Dixie	252,314	140,710	56%	30%	30%	---1	23%	95%	100%	80%	90%	89%
Duval	27,737,519	21,650,639	78%	5%	31%	20%	88%	100%	100%	24%	100%	100%
Escambia	4,486,312	2,650,494	59%	14%	45%	29%	54%	100%	100%	86%	100%	96%
Flagler	739,214	646,234	87%	35%	85%	43%	81%	97%	99%	93%	99%	92%
Franklin	215,634	172,694	80%	54%	78%	41%	77%	100%	100%	88%	100%	100%
Gadsden	651,525	419,129	64%	14%	54%	11%	67%	---1	---1	84%	---1	---1
Gilchrist	222,186	195,453	88%	34%	84%	4%	70%	100%	100%	94%	100%	90%
Glades	221,865	196,263	88%	69%	68%	NA	63%	100%	95%	95%	100%	100%
Gulf	202,356	161,699	80%	15%	83%	20%	90%	100%	98%	90%	100%	96%
Hamilton	145,066	120,770	83%	12%	100%	NA	97%	87%	100%	84%	100%	NA
Hardee	618,385	391,475	63%	15%	47%	36%	71%	99%	97%	92%	100%	91%
Hendry	516,619	385,304	75%	23%	64%	44%	65%	89%	93%	98%	88%	90%
Hernando	1,996,856	1,547,608	78%	27%	64%	53%	68%	100%	100%	91%	93%	98%
Highlands	1,703,954	1,162,240	68%	9%	36%	43%	67%	100%	100%	92%	100%	100%
Hillsborough	34,319,762	12,432,001	36%	3%	40%	34%	66%	100%	100%	90%	100%	95%
Holmes	308,079	193,009	63%	20%	63%	51%	70%	96%	100%	84%	100%	100%
Indian river	1,771,474	1,131,287	64%	13%	66%	30%	61%	100%	99%	83%	100%	96%
Jackson	977,143	797,596	82%	21%	41%	31%	68%	100%	100%	88%	98%	97%
Jefferson	310,968	267,346	86%	39%	86%	NA	56%	100%	100%	88%	100%	100%
Lafayette	90,944	74,708	82%	34%	87%	NA	---1	91%	100%	87%	100%	100%

County	All Divisions			Percentage Collected by Criminal Division				Percentage Collected by Civil Division				
	Total Assessed	Total Collected	Percentage Collected	Circuit	County	Juvenile Delinquency	Traffic	Circuit	County	Traffic	Probate	Family
Lake	4,505,884	2,570,765	57%	10%	55%	40%	67%	99%	99%	92%	100%	99%
Lee	7,334,160	5,701,225	78%	5%	88%	31%	87%	98%	100%	91%	100%	93%
Leon	7,775,448	5,891,833	76%	14%	41%	100%	62%	98%	100%	87%	98%	84%
Levy	578,090	412,805	71%	9%	77%	64%	66%	100%	100%	90%	100%	95%
Liberty	108,497	83,752	77%	31%	84%	NA	95%	100%	99%	78%	100%	98%
Madison	447,570	394,773	88%	66%	100%	100%	100%	97%	99%	87%	100%	98%
Manatee	2,935,956	2,085,230	71%	20%	39%	54%	71%	100%	98%	80%	98%	95%
Marion	4,507,527	2,821,077	63%	14%	50%	34%	67%	99%	100%	92%	100%	91%
Martin	4,009,834	2,655,000	66%	7%	74%	21%	--- <sup>1</sup>	100%	100%	76%	100%	96%
Monroe	2,180,599	1,647,211	76%	40%	59%	7%	66%	95%	100%	83%	99%	98%
Nassau	796,316	601,180	75%	18%	66%	39%	73%	99%	99%	88%	99%	96%
Okaloosa	2,872,049	2,140,577	75%	22%	67%	68%	75%	98%	100%	87%	100%	98%
Okeechobee	504,744	352,564	70%	15%	59%	13%	72%	99%	98%	87%	100%	100%
Orange	48,753,174	37,902,699	78%	8%	30%	8%	60%	98%	97%	72%	100%	99%
Osceola	6,982,809	5,497,355	79%	19%	77%	49%	90%	101%	100%	90%	95%	--- <sup>1</sup>
Palm Beach	3,861,532	3,754,773	97%	--- <sup>1</sup>	--- <sup>1</sup>	39%	--- <sup>1</sup>	99%	99%	--- <sup>1</sup>	99%	97%
Pasco	5,041,039	3,714,468	74%	9%	49%	44%	70%	100%	100%	94%	98%	95%
Pinellas	22,023,923	17,544,062	80%	8%	53%	38%	79%	100%	100%	97%	100%	94%
Polk	9,040,483	5,815,240	64%	10%	39%	51%	58%	100%	100%	92%	100%	100%
Putnam	1,586,030	1,423,866	90%	12%	75%	NA	85%	100%	100%	91%	100%	88%
Santa Rosa	2,291,654	1,829,040	80%	24%	52%	48%	74%	100%	102%	76%	99%	98%
Sarasota	4,611,628	3,308,900	72%	14%	36%	46%	68%	97%	100%	92%	95%	95%
Seminole	5,214,631	4,307,076	83%	33%	79%	--- <sup>1</sup>	90%	100%	100%	84%	100%	100%
St. Johns	2,125,432	1,745,316	82%	18%	64%	30%	74%	100%	100%	92%	100%	97%
St. Lucie	4,311,787	2,801,685	65%	10%	47%	30%	63%	93%	99%	89%	100%	99%
Sumter	1,420,766	1,061,699	75%	25%	68%	52%	100%	71%	100%	100%	94%	100%
Suwannee	680,903	320,978	47%	7%	68%	NA	74%	10%	100%	71%	100%	91%
Taylor	327,267	219,974	67%	19%	64%	100%	56%	100%	100%	90%	100%	100%
Union	98,302	76,261	78%	18%	72%	89%	72%	86%	100%	85%	100%	89%
Volusia	6,958,471	5,054,592	73%	10%	52%	39%	77%	100%	100%	92%	100%	100%
Wakulla	694,900	574,970	83%	72%	19%	60%	85%	100%	100%	92%	100%	96%
Walton	1,291,375	552,516	43%	7%	77%	66%	76%	100%	100%	90%	100%	98%
Washington	566,125	414,515	73%	25%	60%	23%	64%	92%	99%	88%	98%	95%

<sup>1</sup> Data not reported to the Clerks of Court Operations Corporation.

NA = No assessments within the division during the three-month reporting period.

DeSoto, Gadsden, and Palm Beach, highlighted in blue, did not report on several divisions, making any calculation of their overall collections unreliable for evaluative purposes.

Source: Clerks of Court Operations Corporation.

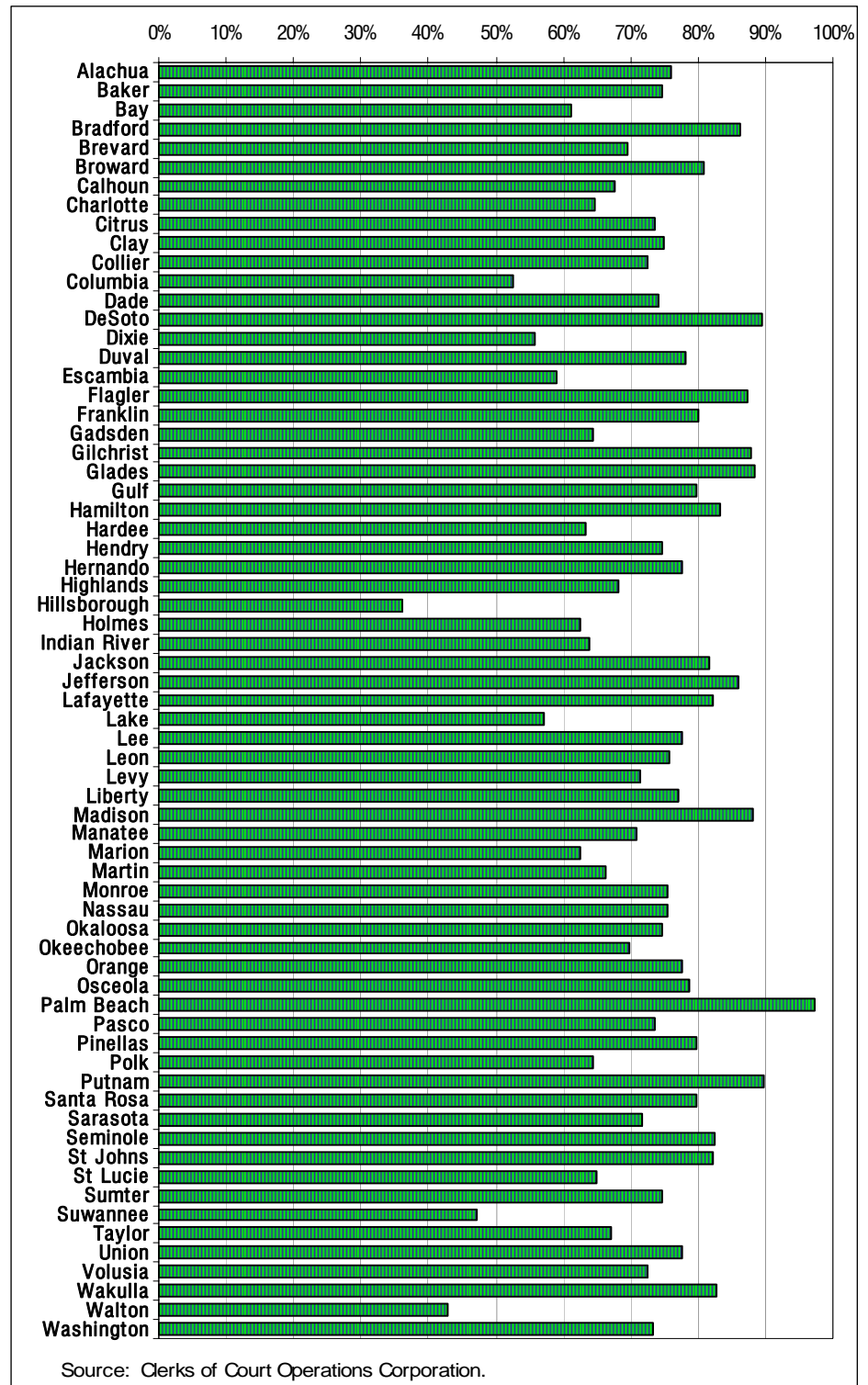


**Appendix B**

# Percentage of Assessments Collected Varied Considerably Among Clerks

The average percentage of fines, fees, service charges and court costs assessed during the second quarter of 2005 that were collected during the four quarters following assessment was 71%. There is considerable variability among the clerks in the percentage of these assessments they were able to collect. Collection rates ranged from a high of 90% to a low of 36%, as shown in the chart below.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> DeSoto, Gadsden, and Palm Beach did not report on several divisions, making any calculation of their overall collections unreliable for evaluative purposes.



## Appendix C

# Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation

**Honorable Jim Watkins**  
Lake County  
*Chairperson*

**Honorable Howard Forman**  
Broward County  
*Vice Chairman*

**Honorable Richard Weiss**  
Polk County  
*Secretary / Treasurer*

**Honorable John Crawford**  
Nassau County

**Honorable Marsha Ewing**  
Martin County

**Honorable Charlie Green**  
Lee County

**Honorable Harvey Ruvin**  
Dade County

**Honorable Tim Sanders**  
Madison County

**John Dew**  
*Executive Director*

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March 14, 2007

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Tallahassee, FL 32399-1475

Dear Mr. VanLandingham,

As Chairperson of the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation (CCOC), I want to express my appreciation to your staff for the professional manner in which they handled this project. As indicated by your report, the CCOC has adopted collections standards and is continually in the process of helping Clerks evaluate their success in meeting these standards.

Your report provides two recommendations. The first recommendation states "We recommend that the corporation identify what collection methods work best, under what conditions, and in what combinations. Given the large amount of potential funds that can be collected to help fund the state court system, the corporation should initially focus on helping clerks identify options for improving civil traffic collections. The corporation should report its findings to the clerks and develop technical assistance programs to help ensure successful implementation." We concur with your recommendation and will continue to work with Clerks to find ways to improve collection efforts.

The second recommendation states "We recommend that the corporation consider modifying the juvenile delinquency performance standard, which could enable clerks to concentrate their efforts on activities that produce the highest return on investment of collections resources." We agree with the recommendation and in fact the CCOC Executive Council, after its annual review of standards, modified the juvenile delinquency performance standard at our January 23, 2007 meeting.

I understand the reason your report contains individual Clerk data on collections. However, it is important that those reading this report understand you are only displaying information on one control group. The Corporation, since you received this data, has information from several additional control groups which would show different collection rates. Also, in your list of the variety of factors that impact collection rates on page 4, I suggest you include the ratio of case types as an important factor. As an example, if a Clerk's Office has a higher number of circuit criminal cases, you can expect their overall rate of collections to be lower. Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to your recommendations.

Sincerely,



**James C. Watkins**  
Chairperson

CC: CCOC Executive Council Members  
Ricky Lyons, President, Florida Association of Court Clerks  
John D. Dew, CCOC Executive Director  
Joseph Boyd, CCOC Legal Counsel  
Ken Kent, FACC Executive Director



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