

***TUCSON CITY COURT  
ARIZONA'S 2<sup>ND</sup> LARGEST VOLUME COURT  
COMBINED ANNUAL REPORT  
FY15 AND 16***



***FISCAL YEAR 15 AND 16  
JULY 1, 2014 – JUNE 30, 2016***

## **BACKGROUND**

Tucson City Court is now Arizona's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest volume Court. The Arizona Supreme Court's Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) published FY16 statistics and shows Tucson City Court dropped to the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest volume Court. During FY16 Phoenix Municipal Court once again became Arizona's largest volume court with total filings of 156,993, with 267 employees while Tucson City Court had total filings of 152,271 with 127 employees. There are two main reasons for the change. The first is the new method of processing parking tickets, which are now processed by Park Tucson. The only parking tickets filed with the Court are those not paid to Park Tucson within the first 30 days or those that are contested. The second reason is the significant decrease in civil traffic charges filed with the court.

Tucson City Court is a Limited Jurisdiction Court (LJC) responsible for adjudicating misdemeanor crimes, violations of criminal traffic, civil traffic, parking and city ordinances within the city limits. Tucson City Court processes an average of 243,000 charges annually; approximately 30% of the charges filed are criminal. The court building averages 366,000+ visitors each year. The court collects an average of \$24.7 million per year in gross collections and disburses about \$13.3 million to the City of Tucson with the remainder disbursed to the state and other local governments. The Court's customer call center receives roughly 129,600 calls per year and approximately 60,000 pieces of mail per year. In Fiscal Years (FY) 15 and 16 the Court was authorized 135.8 employees: 12 judicial officers and 123.8 administrative staff. In preparation for FY17 the Court has reduced its employees to 112.8 which will be the number of authorized positions for FY17; 9 judicial officers, 101 administrative staff and 2.8 grant funded employees.

The Tucson City Court seeks to be innovative and efficient in delivering court services to the public and City of Tucson. The FY15 and FY16 years have been challenging due to declining resources and the high number of charges filed with the court. To manage the workload we rely heavily on automation. During these years the court focused on preparing for a transition to a new statewide automated case management system; the Arizona Judicial Automated Case System (AJACS). Our legacy system, AZTEC, was approaching 19 years in age and was written in a programming language rarely used today. The move to AJACS in FY16 allowed the court to update our server environment and operating systems to current technology.

## **TUCSON CITY COURT MISSION STATEMENT**

**TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY AND  
PROTECT INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS BY  
PROVIDING PROMPT AND FAIR  
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**



## TUCSON CITY COURT QUICK FACTS

### CHARGES FILED

	FY15	FY16
Criminal	51,416	47,283
Civil	118,317	98,169
Petitions for Orders of Protection Injunctions against Harassment	1,550	1,944

### TRIALS AND HEARINGS

	FY15	FY16
Bench Trials	311	202
Jury Trials	123	76
Civil Traffic Hearings	2,685	1,330

### CLEARANCE RATES

	FY15	FY16
Criminal Charges	184%	190%
Civil Charges	111%	126%

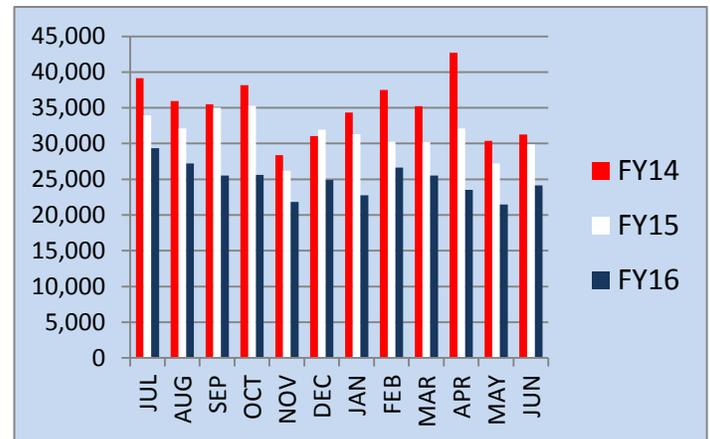
### COLLECTIONS

	FY15	FY16
Total Collections	\$27,844,065	\$22,310,551
Remitted to Tucson	\$14,715,720	\$11,539,801
Remitted to State	\$10,248,743	\$8,149,918
Trust Accounts (bonds, restitution, FARE)	\$2,879,602	\$2,620,831

### STAFF LEVELS

	FY15	FY16
Judicial Officers	15	11
Staff	120.8	101.8
Total	135.8	112.8*

### VISITORS TO COURT BUILDING



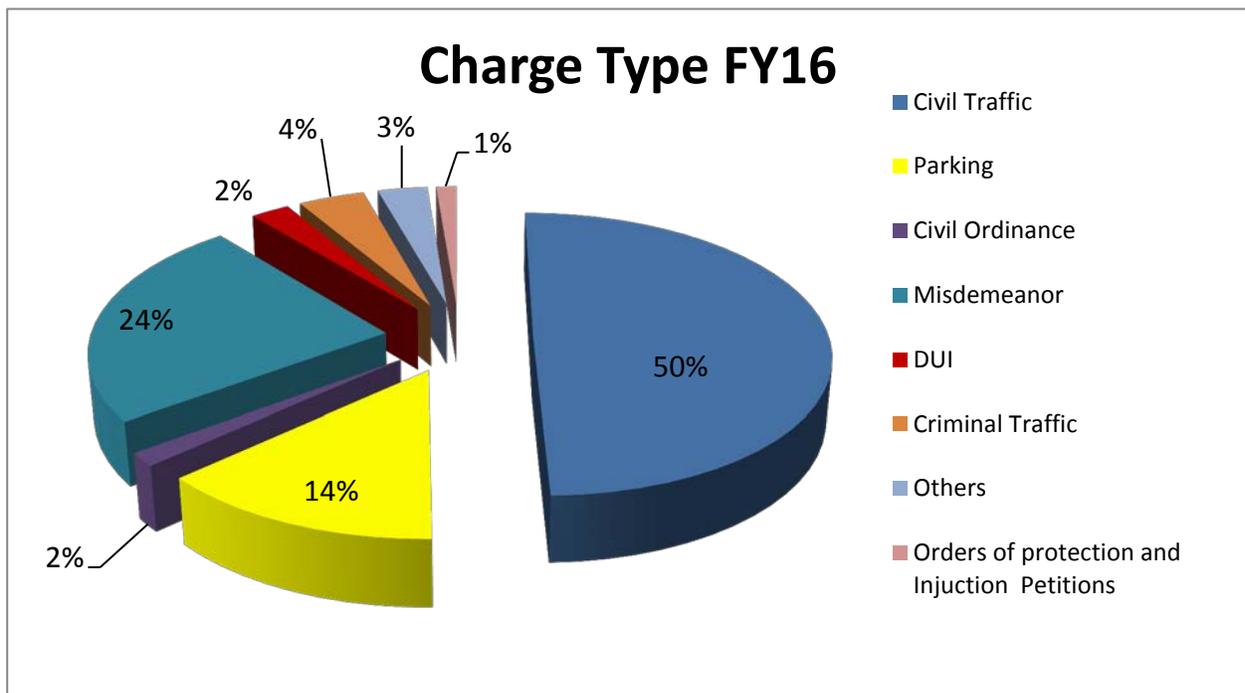
\*The Court reduced to this number of employees in April 2016 to avoid layoffs heading into FY17.



## WORKLOAD AND CHARGES FILED

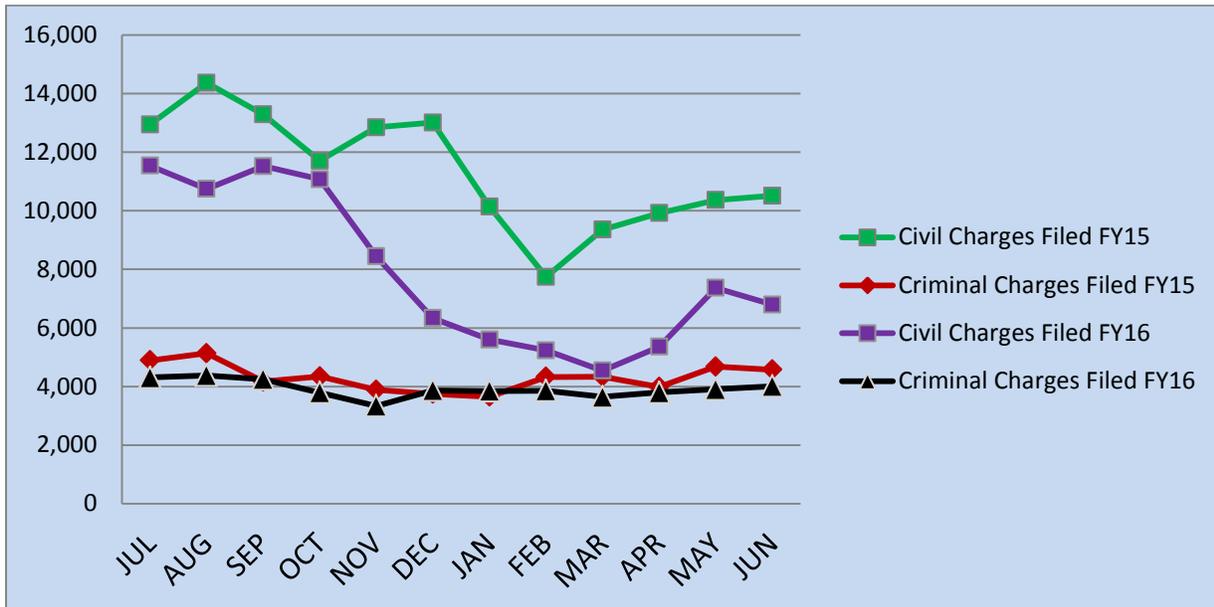
A court case is initiated with the filing of a charge or charges against an individual or entity. The Tucson Police Department issues citations and then files the charges with the Tucson City Court. There can be up to five charges/violations on each citation. The court must dispose of each charge in a case, which is why the court tracks charges filed and the police department tracks citations issued. Since FY14 the court has seen a significant decline in changes filed and in particular with the number of civil traffic charges filed.

In FY16 the Tucson Police Department's Traffic Camera Safety Program also known as a photo enforcement program was ended through a voter approved ballot initiative. The ending of the Traffic Camera Safety Program resulted in a decrease in the number of civil traffic charges filed with the court of approximately 33,000 charges or reduction of approximately 18 to 24% in civil traffic charges filed depending on the year.

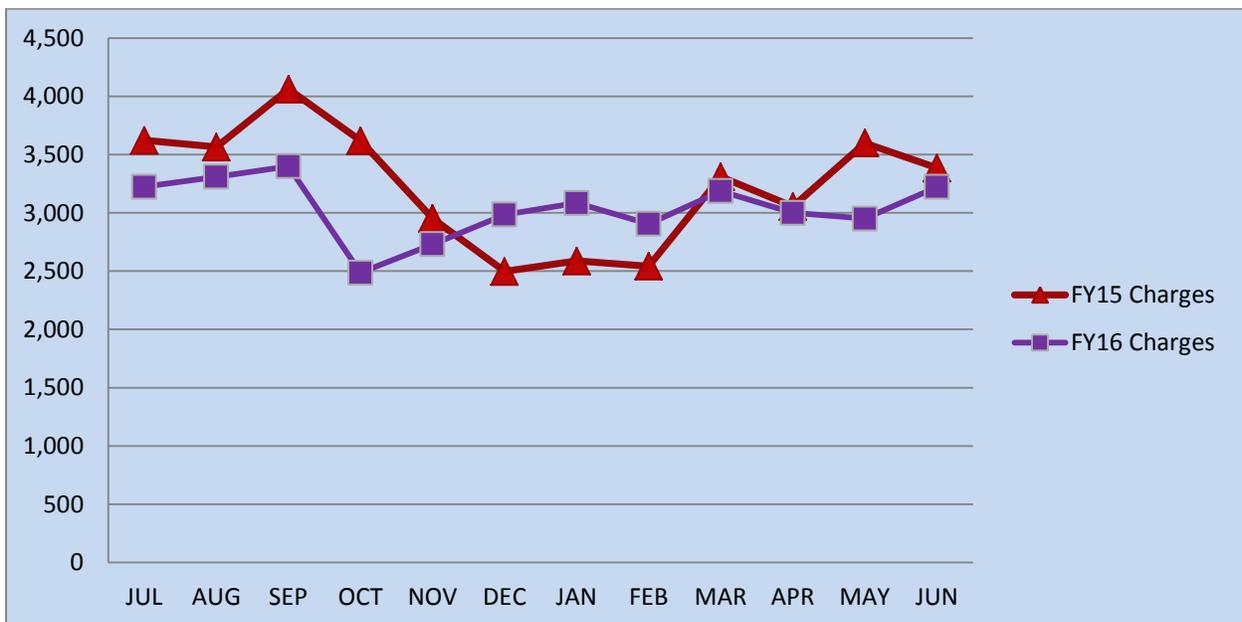




## CHARGES FILED

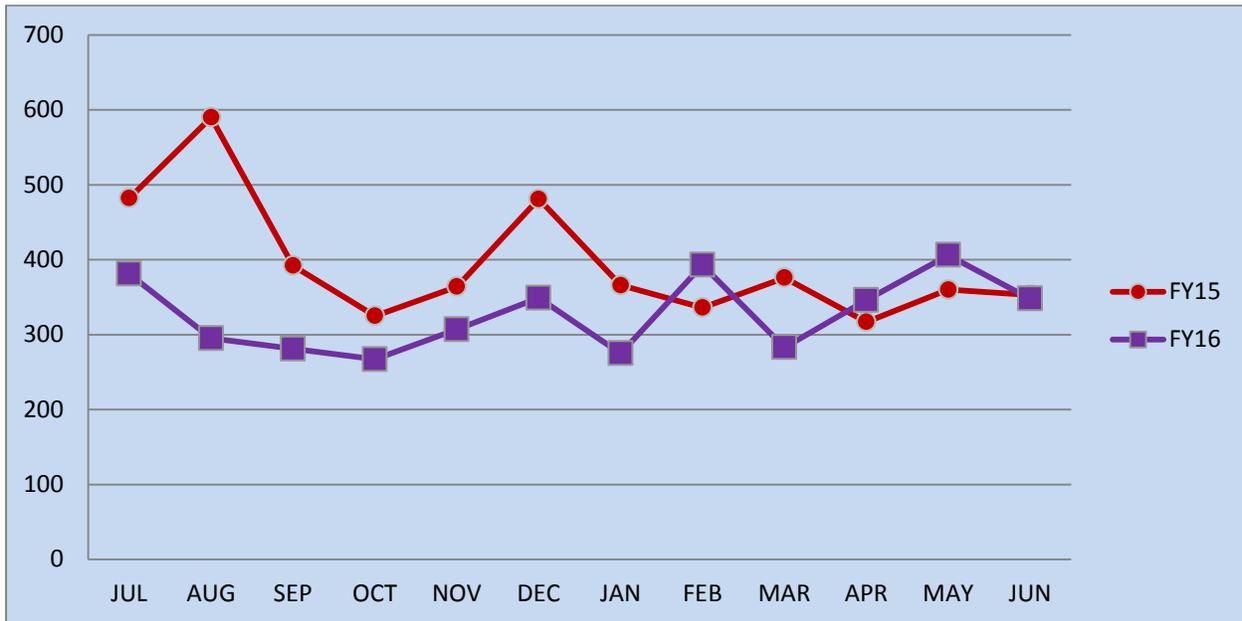


## MISDEMEANORS FILED

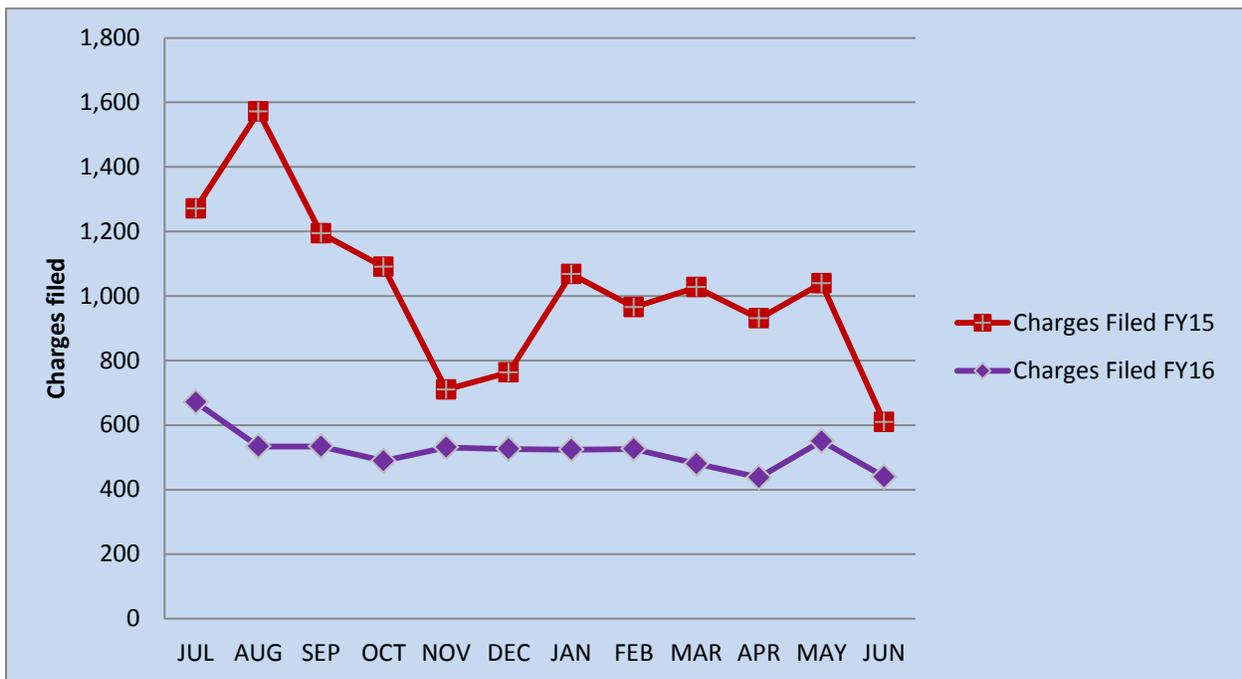




## DUI CHARGES FILED

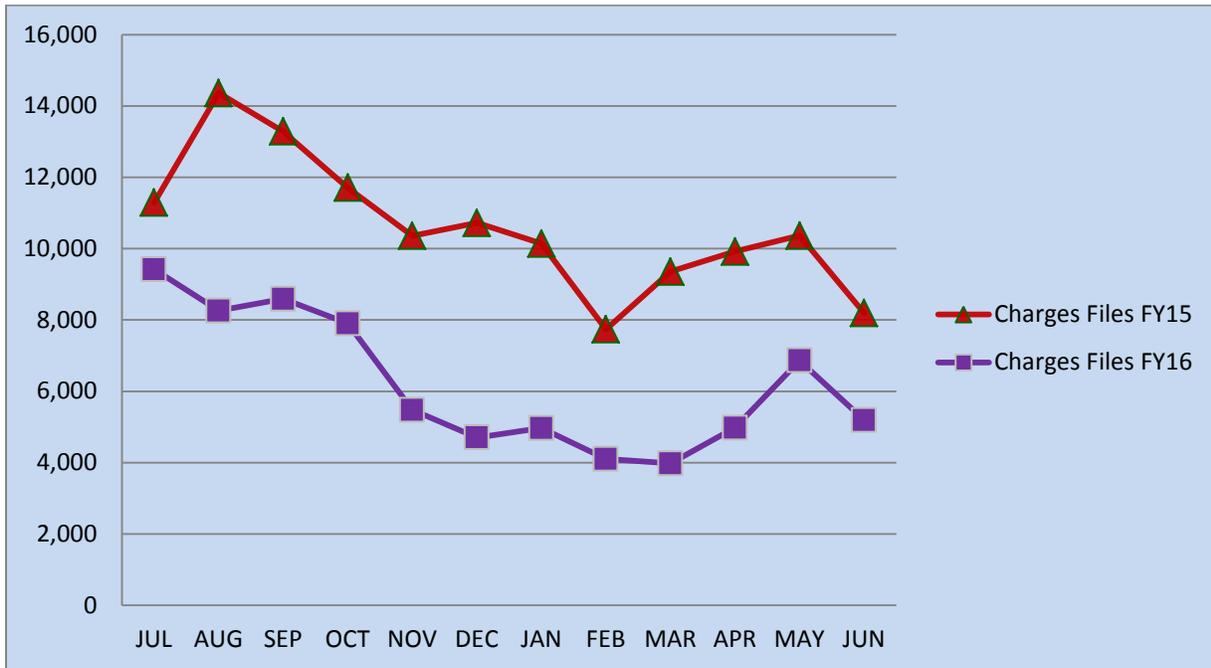


## CRIMINAL TRAFFIC CHARGES FILED

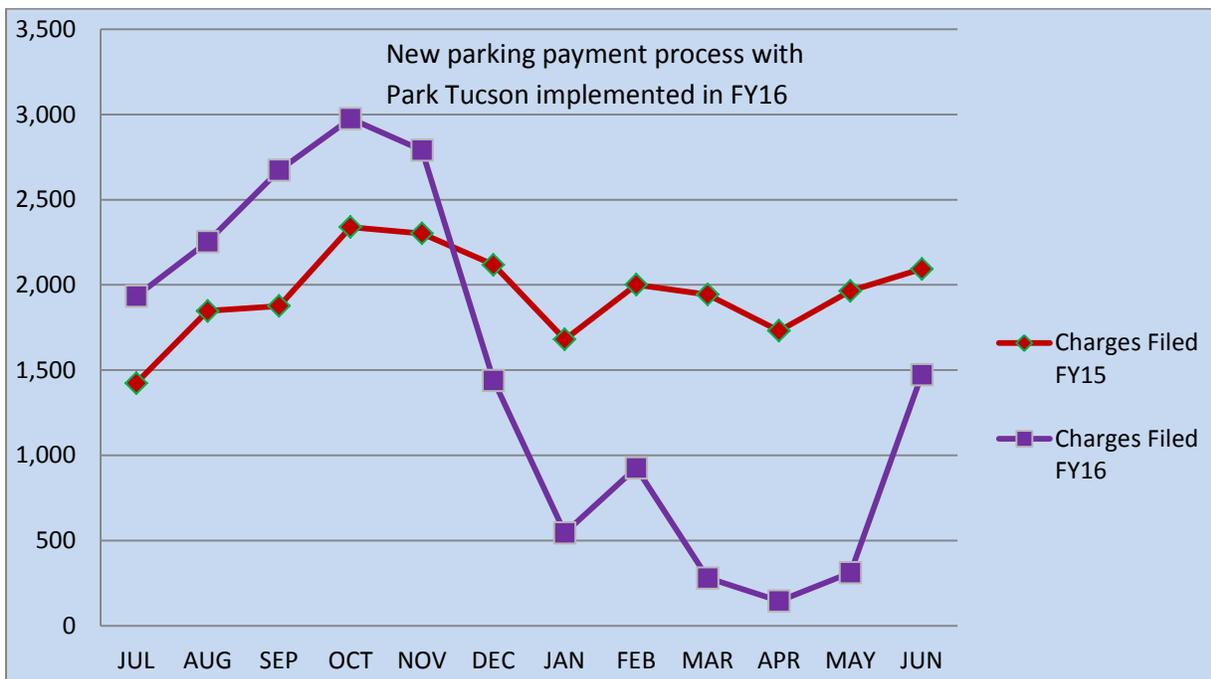




## CIVIL TRAFFIC CHARGES FILED

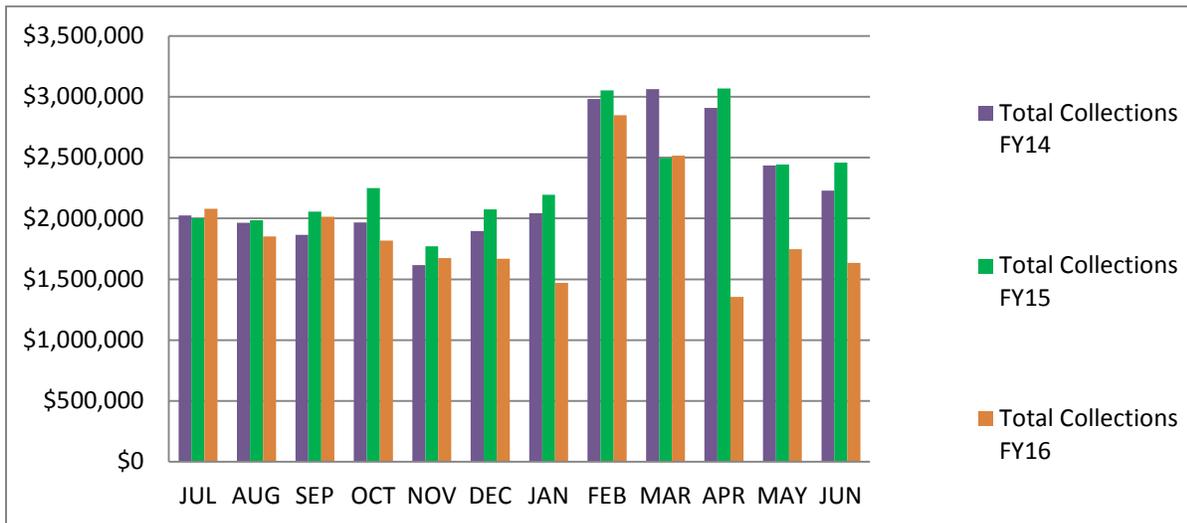


## PARKING CHARGES FILED



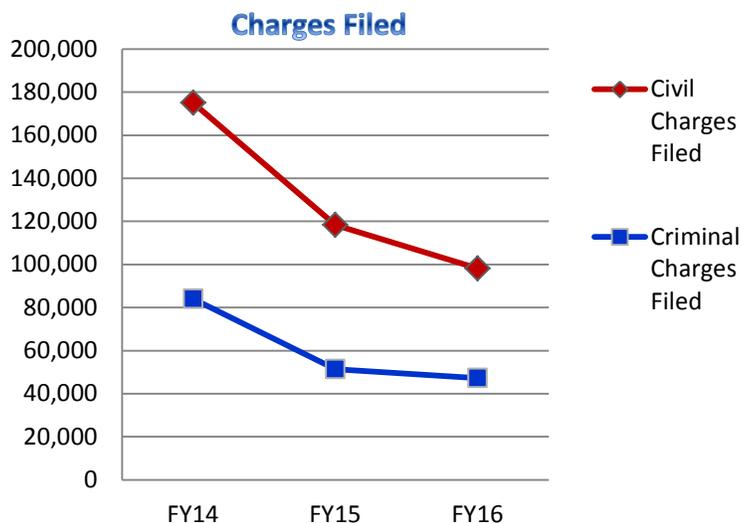
## ENFORCEMENT OF COURT ORDERED SANCTIONS

In FY15 the court set a new record for total collections with \$27,844,065. In FY16 total collections were \$22,310,551 which is a decrease of 20% and can be attributed to the decline in the number of charges filed with the court in FY16.



Funds collected by the court are distributed according to state statutes. The Tucson City Court remits funds to the State of Arizona and other governments and government agencies as required by law. Below is how FY16 funds collected by Tucson City Court were distributed:

The Court also sentences defendants to community restitution (community service). Each year defendants serve approximately 37,000 hours of community restitution. Credit given for community service is valued at \$10 per hour various nonprofit organizations in Tucson are receiving roughly \$370,000 in service.





Criminal and civil delinquent fines are reported to the Fines, Fees and Restitution Enforcement (FARE) Program. The FARE Program is a statewide collection program run by the Arizona Supreme Court and has several unique collection tools. Among these are the Tax Intercept Program (TIP) and Traffic Ticket Enforcement Assistance Program (TTEAP).

When a fine is paid, various amounts are distributed to state and local governments or agencies as required by law. Although many consider the total fine amount to be excessively high, the City of Tucson may not receive the majority of the total fine paid. The State of Arizona imposes an 83% surcharge, \$20 probation fee, a \$13 special assessment for law enforcement officer safety equipment and on every fine, penalty, and forfeiture imposed and collected by the courts for: criminal offenses, civil penalties for violations of motor vehicle statutes, violation of local ordinances and violation of Game and Fish statutes in Title 17. Note: The \$20 probation assessment is NOT assessed on violations of local parking.

### FY16 FINE DISTRIBUTION FOR FAILURE TO STOP AT A RED LIGHT (ARS 28-645A3A)

	\$ Amount	% of Fine
Base Fine (City)	\$145.03	43.04%
Case Processing Fee (City)	\$20.00	5.93%
83% State Surcharge on Base Fine	\$120.37	35.72%
83% State Surcharge on Case Processing Fee	\$16.60	4.93%
State Probation Fee	\$20.00	5.93%
\$13 Special Assessment – Law Enforcement Safety Equipment		
State	\$8.00	2.37%
City	\$4.00	1.19%
County	\$1.00	0.30%
\$2 Special Assessment Victims’ Rights Enforcement	\$2.00	0.59%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$337.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## **COURT SERVICES**

The Court provides many services to the public and defendants; the most obvious is the ability to contest a charge filed against them. There are many lesser known services provided to the public and particularly those charged with a criminal violation. Many of these services are provided at reduced or no cost to the defendant but are paid by the Court

**Interpreters:** the Court provides interpreter services for all court cases, civil and criminal at no cost to defendants. The top six languages used in the Tucson City Court in FY15 and 16 were:

FY15

FY16

Language	Cost	Language	Cost
Spanish	\$51,560	Spanish	\$ 62,370.00
American Sign Language	\$18,095	Arabic	\$ 15,470.00
Arabic	\$11,050	ASL	\$ 15,080.00
Chinese	\$8,394	CART	\$ 7,600.00
Vietnamese	\$5,720	CDI	\$ 5,070.00
Dinka	\$4,940	Chinese/Mandarin	\$ 4,810.00
Total Top Six Lanuages	\$99,759	Total Top Six Lanuage	\$110,400
Total Interpreter Costs	\$250,878	Total Interpreter Costs	\$262,289

In addition to the top six languages the Court provides interpreters in numerous other languages for both civil and criminal cases as required by federal and state law as well as court rules. The Court has two employees who are Spanish language interpreters and their salaries are included in the total costs for interpreters

### **Other Services**

Conflict Attorney Costs	
FY15	\$123,497.00
FY16	\$86,095.00

Expert Witness Costs	
FY15	\$56,219
FY16	\$45,722

Juror Costs	
FY15	\$154,563
FY16	\$136,794

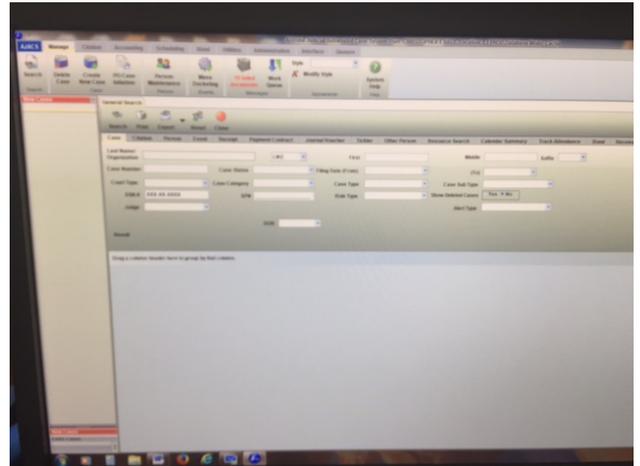
Rule 11 Costs	
FY15	\$31,825
FY16	\$0

## **PROJECTS**

During FY15 and FY16 Tucson City Court undertook several large projects. The most important of these was our transition from a 19+ year old case management system, AZTEC, to a new statewide case management system, Arizona Judicial Automated Case System or AJACS. Secondly, the Court's building improvement project which moved from the planning and design phase to the construction phase and finally we had the ongoing jail board reduction project.

### **Arizona Judicial Automated Case System (AJACS)**

The Court's transition to AJACS started over two years ago with a data clean-up effort. The "go live" date to AJACS was April 1, 2016. The actual transition from AZTEC to AJACS was more difficult than originally planned and pretesting had indicated. The numbers were staggering. Of the existing 3.1 million cases with 150.4 million records in our AZTEC database, we moved approximately 440,000+ cases with roughly 13.2 million records to AJACS.



Tucson City Court is the largest volume court to convert to AJACS. Other courts in Pima County to convert to AJACS are Oro Valley Magistrate Court, Green Valley Justice Court, Ajo Justice Court, South Tucson Municipal Court and Sahuarita Municipal Court. The number of charges for all five of those courts in FY15 added to 16,007 charges which equates to 7% of the charges filed with Tucson City Court during the same time period.

As part of the transition to AJACS, the Court replaced our antiquated and obsolete servers and operating systems with current state of the art hardware and operating systems. Working with the City's Information Technology Department, network switches were upgraded in the Court building. These actions along with our computer replacement project ensure the Court has the automation equipment needed to provide services to the public for several years.

## **BUILDING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

In FY15 the Court began a building improvement project designed to extend the life of the court building by 15 years or until 2030. Many improvements are planned but two which have been accomplished are the creation of a transport courtroom and an Alternative to Jail (ATJ) Program courtroom.

**TRANSPORT COURTROOM**



**ATJ COURTROOM**



The creation of these two courtrooms allows the court to restrict movement of in-custody defendants and prisoners to a small area of our first floor where there will be little to no contact with the public or building employees. This greatly enhances safety for the prisoners, transport officers, court employees and public.

Building improvement plans for FY17 include improvements to the main entrance, placing a covering over the courtyard atrium, resurfacing the six floors of balcony walkways and improvements to the Orders of Protection area.



## **SUMMARY**

Fiscal Years (FY) 15 and 16 saw great progress to Tucson City Court in physical and automation infrastructure. The Court transitioned to a new case management system and made many upgrades to the facility. Facility improvements will continue and should be completed by June 2017. The court will continue with advancements in automation in FY17 to include an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system and improvements to our website to increase access to court services.