Judicial Certification

The supreme court has used a weighted caseload system to evaluate the need for new trial court judgeships since 1999, and, for DCA judges, since 2006. The weighted caseload system analyzes Florida’s caseload statistics according to complexity. Cases that are typically complex, such as capital murder cases, receive a higher weight, while cases that are generally less complex, such as civil traffic cases, receive a lower weight. These weights are then applied to case filing statistics to determine the need for additional judgeships.

The need for additional judgeships remains high for several reasons: an absence of funding for previously certified judgeships, overall increases in judicial workload, and fewer support staff. If judicial workload continues to exceed capacity and the judicial need deficit is not addressed, likely consequences may be case processing delays, less time devoted to dispositions, and potentially diminished access to the courts.

In a December 2016 opinion, the Florida Supreme Court certified the need for 6 additional judges: four circuit judges and two county court judges. However, the Florida Legislature did not approve funding for any new judgeships this year (take this link to the opinion).