




COUNTY OF LEHIGH  
OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

LEHIGH COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER  
17 SOUTH SEVENTH STREET  
ALLENTOWN, PA 18101-2400  
(610) 782-3082 FAX: (610) 820-3335

THOMAS SLONAKER  
COUNTY CONTROLLER

JOHN A. FALK  
DEPUTY CONTROLLER

TO: Final Report Distribution

FROM: Thomas Slonaker, County Controller 

DATE: November 8, 2010

RE: Magisterial District Court Offices – Decennial Reorganization – Report #10-64A

---

We have recently completed an analysis of district court costs and activity levels. The results of our analysis are summarized in "Addendum to the Summary Report #10-64 – Magisterial District Court Offices – Decennial Reorganization". Our report #10-64A is attached.

The results of our audit are:

- Consolidation and combination of some magisterial district court offices could result in over \$500,000 per year of county cost savings.
- Establishing separate cost centers in the county budget would enhance court administration management's ability to monitor expenditures versus workload on an on-going basis.

**COUNTY OF LEHIGH, PENNSYLVANIA**  
**MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURT OFFICES - DECENNIAL REORGANIZATION**  
**ADDENDUM TO THE SUMMARY REPORT #10-64**

REPORT NO. 10-64A

COUNTY OF LEHIGH, PENNSYLVANIA  
MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURT OFFICES – DECENNIAL  
REORGANIZATION ADDENDUM TO SUMMARY REPORT #10-64

*Table of Contents*

	<b>Page(s)</b>
Magisterial District Court Offices - Decennial Reorganization, Addendum to Summary Report #10-64 .....	1
Magisterial District Judge (MDJ) Analysis Highlights .....	2
Summary Cost Data – Recommendation #1 .....	3
MDC Office Reorganization – Recommendation #2 .....	4-5
Exhibit I – Activity and Cost Ratios .....	6
Exhibit II – MDC Cost Breakout by Object Code .....	7-8
Court's Response .....	9




COUNTY OF LEHIGH  
OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

LEHIGH COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER  
17 SOUTH SEVENTH STREET  
ALLENTOWN, PA 18101-2400  
(610) 782-3082 FAX: (610) 820-3335

THOMAS SLONAKER  
COUNTY CONTROLLER

JOHN A. FALK  
DEPUTY CONTROLLER

**TO:** Honorable William Platt, President Judge, 31<sup>st</sup> Judicial District, County of Lehigh  
**FROM:** Thomas Slonaker, County Controller   
**DATE:** October 26, 2010  
**RE:** Magisterial District Justice Offices - County of Lehigh

Addendum to: Summary Report # 10-64  
Magisterial District Court Offices – Decennial Reorganization

---

Each year after the federal decennial census, the number, boundaries, and classes of magisterial districts within each judicial district is to be reestablished. The criteria for reestablishment of the magisterial districts includes population (census) statistics, caseload trends, judicial equity, ease of access for the public and law enforcement and taxpayer cost-effectiveness. In order to assist the court in reestablishment of judicial district resource allocations, we offer the following analysis for your consideration.

The court budget combines all costs for magisterial district court (MDC) offices. In order to measure caseload activity, judicial equity and taxpayer cost-effectiveness by individual office, we utilized the services of a summer college intern, William R. Berndt, to compile individual MDC office costs for the purpose of analyzing the costs in terms of office activity (citations/employee, receipts/employee, cost/citation, cost/receipt issued, cost per employee). Calendar year 2009 was used as a representative basis for our analysis. The detail financial transactions were reviewed by Mr. Berndt and separated into individual cost centers to identify individual office costs. Compilation of citations processed and receipts issued by each office in 2009 was also performed by Mr. Berndt. The analysis was performed under the direction and supervision of the controller's office staff.

We concluded that the decennial reorganization may offer an opportunity to improve MDC operations and reduce costs through office reorganization and consolidation. The following two pages highlight MDC activity levels and costs using calendar year 2009 as the basis for analysis. Additional detail is included as Exhibit I (Activity & Cost Ratios) and Exhibit II (MDC Cost Breakout by Object Code). Electronic files, generated to compile the detail information presented, is available to you on request.

Magisterial District Judge (MDJ) Analysis Highlights

Significant statistics from the analysis (see Exhibit I for all offices):

<u>Metric</u>	<u>2009 Average</u>	<u>2009 High</u>	<u>2009 Low</u>
Citations Entered	6,030	MDJ Engler 8,423	MDJ Beck 2,696
Cash Receipts Issued	9,849	MDJ Engler 15,169	MDJ Beck 4,365
Staffing Level	4	MDJ Devine 6.5	MDJs Butler/Beck 2
Citations Per Employee	1,623	MDJ Crawford 2,692	MDJ Manescu 1,089
Receipts Per Employee	2,652	MDJ Rapp 4,199	MDJ Maura 1,717
Total County MDC Costs	\$274,169	MDJ Hammond \$400,723	MDJ Beck \$156,715
Personnel Costs Only	\$208,588	MDJ Devine \$331,763	MDJ Beck \$107,310
County Costs Per Employee	\$73,815	MDJ Crawford \$100,091	MDJ Devine \$52,431
County Cost Per Citation	\$46.40	MDJ Beck \$58.13	MDJ Balliet \$36.20
County Cost Per Receipt	\$29.45	MDJ Maura \$52.29	MDJ Engler \$20.69
Office Rent (Excludes MDJs Engler & Devine)	\$34,687	MDJ Merlo \$66,703	MDJ Maura \$20,836

Summary Cost Data

(See Exhibit II for a complete breakout of costs by object code)

<u>2009 Total Costs by Office</u>	<u>Personnel Only</u>	<u>Office Rent</u>
Balliet        \$232,304	\$167,592	\$25,150
Beck         \$156,715	\$107,310	\$25,467
Butler        \$166,499	\$113,139	\$26,400
Crawford     \$300,272	\$192,836	\$43,458
Devine        \$340,799	\$331,763	\$0
Engler        \$313,909	\$253,423	\$0
Halal         \$267,479	\$215,272	\$21,780
Hammond     \$400,723	\$311,552	\$45,793
Harding      \$195,952	\$137,884	\$27,038
Leh            \$259,921	\$184,519	\$43,458
Manescu      \$368,867	\$295,653	\$42,762
Maura        \$269,364	\$218,744	\$20,836
Merlo         \$380,433	\$256,353	\$66,704
Rapp          \$185,135	\$134,197	\$27,395

**Recommendation #1**

The court should consider establishing separate cost centers in the county budget in order for management to have the information necessary to monitor expenditures versus workload on an ongoing basis.

## Recommendation #2

The court should consider consolidation and combination for some of the MDC offices. Consider assigning two Magisterial District Justices to the combined offices. Consider expanded hours to use the facility more than eight hours a day and provide extended service hours to the public and local law enforcement. We believe significant county cost savings of at least \$500,000 per year are achievable given the potential for available economies of scale generated by the possible combinations of two MDC offices into one office. Potential cost savings include county MDC staffing, office lease payments, other operating expenses, and other county indirect costs. For example, possibilities include:

- Merge 31-01-03 with 31-02-01 – This office would cover Allentown wards 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 13, 17, & 18. These offices are less than one half mile (0.48) apart. With the planned move of the Coroner's Office to new facilities in South Whitehall, the historic courthouse may have the space to house a combined MDC office.
- Merge 31-1-01 with 31-01-02 – This office would cover Allentown wards 4, 8, 7, 10 & 11. These offices are less than one mile (0.55) apart. The county-owned voting machine storage building currently houses 31-1-01. Significantly less space is now required for voting machines storage due to the state-mandated conversion a few years ago.
- Merge 31-01-04 with 31-02-03 – This office would cover Emmaus, Upper Milford, Macungie Borough, and Allentown wards 12, 16, & 19. These offices are less than 3 miles apart.
- Merge 31-01-05 with 31-01-06 – This office would cover Allentown Wards 14 & 15, Hanover Township, Catasauqua Borough and west Bethlehem wards 10,11,12, & 13. These offices are less than 4 miles apart.

Other possibilities may include:

- Merge 31-03-03 with 31-01-08 – This office would cover Salisbury, Fountain Hill, Coopersburg, Lower Milford and Upper Saucon. These offices are less than 6 miles apart.
- Merge 31-02-02 with 31-03-02 – This office would cover North & South Whitehall, Alburtis, Lowhill, Upper Macungie, Lower Macungie, and Weisenberg. A centrally located office could be established to serve these areas. Guidelines for the last statewide Magisterial District Reestablishment Subcommittee Intergovernmental Task Force suggested "...that residents of a magisterial district should not have to travel more than 30 minutes to the district court." (source - page 17 – August 21, 2001 report)

A question arises as to requirement of every district having a physical office within its boundaries. We know it is common practice for MDJs to fill in for each other at offices other than their own on a temporary basis. We also recognize that currently one office, MDC 31-01-02, maintains an office location outside the district (in 31-01-01).

As you know, the Rules of Conduct, Office Standards and Civil Procedures for Magisterial District Judges [Title 246 PA Code, Part I., Chapter 100 paragraph B(1)] states, "The president judge or his or her designee may assign temporarily the magisterial district judge of any magisterial district to serve another magisterial district whenever such assignment is needed (*among other reasons*): (c) to otherwise provide for the efficient administration of justice. Also, "Under paragraph (B), one or more magisterial district judges may be temporarily assigned to serve one or more magisterial districts."

We believe an opportunity may exist:

- to improve MDC availability through expanded hours / flexible scheduling;
- reduce or eliminate office rental and supporting operating expenditures;
- reduce personnel costs by taking advantages of economies of scale; and
- to increase the level of internal accounting control over cash handling through proper separation of duties (not currently available in small offices).

As always, we remain available to work with all county offices to provide high quality services to the county taxpayers at a reasonable cost.

#### Exhibits (2)

Exhibit I - Activity & Cost Ratios

Exhibit II - MDC Cost Breakout by Object Code

#### Final Distribution

xc: Board of Commissioners  
Donald T. Cunningham, Jr, County Executive  
The Honorable Carol K. McGinley, President Judge Elect  
Susan T. Schellenberg, Court Administrator

bxc: William B. Berndt, Deputy Court Administrator  
Brian L. Kahler, Fiscal Officer  
Frank D. Kane, Chief of Staff  
Thomas S. Muller, Director of Administration  
H. Gordon Roberts, District Judge Administrator



Activity and Cost Ratios														
Data on Citations / Receipts / Employees							Activity Ratios				Cost Ratios			Exhibit J
Magistrate	Traffic	Non-Traffic	Civil & LL		Misc.	Total Citations Entered	Receipts Issued	Employee Count	Total Costs	Citation per Employee	Receipts per Employee	County Costs Per Employee	Cost Per Citation	Cost Per Receipt
			Tenant	Criminal										
Balliet	3,478	1,219	1,064	657	-	6,418	8,599	3	\$ 232,304	2,139	2,866	\$ 77,435	\$ 36.20	\$ 27.02
Beck	787	1,251	278	203	177	2,696	4,365	2	156,715	1,348	2,183	78,358	58.13	35.90
Butler	2,636	837	429	241	-	4,143	6,028	2	166,499	2,072	3,014	83,250	40.19	27.62
Crawford	5,775	866	700	513	222	8,076	11,187	3	300,272	2,692	3,729	100,091	37.18	26.84
Devine	4,909	1,615	744	956	199	8,423	13,343	6.5	340,799	1,296	2,053	52,431	40.46	25.54
Engler	5,150	1,354	858	764	-	8,126	15,169	5	313,909	1,625	3,034	62,782	38.63	20.69
Halal	3,199	999	654	662	230	5,744	10,198	4	267,479	1,436	2,550	66,870	46.57	26.23
Hammond	4,402	2,103	527	517	232	7,781	10,842	4.5	400,723	1,729	2,409	89,050	51.50	36.96
Harding	3,111	286	247	206	-	3,850	5,942	2.5	195,952	1,540	2,377	78,381	50.90	32.98
Leh	2,362	775	1,504	508	-	5,149	10,340	3.5	259,921	1,471	2,954	74,263	50.48	25.14
Manescu	4,565	995	593	378	-	6,531	14,790	6	368,867	1,089	2,465	61,478	56.48	24.94
Maura	3,705	484	410	274	-	4,873	5,151	3	269,354	1,624	1,717	89,785	55.27	52.29
Merlo	5,263	1,332	735	613	-	7,943	13,540	5	380,433	1,589	2,708	76,087	47.90	28.10
Rapp	3,339	758	318	247	-	4,662	8,398	2	185,135	2,331	4,199	92,568	39.71	22.05
Total	52,681	14,874	9,061	6,739	1,060	84,415	137,892	52	\$ 3,838,362	1,623	2,652			
Average	3,763	1,062	647	481	76	6,030	9,849	4	\$ 274,169	1,623	2,652	\$ 73,815	\$ 46.40	\$ 29.45

**MDC Cost Breakout by Object Code**

**Exhibit II**  
**Page 1 of 2**

DOB 100800.000.	Expense Line Item	Central Court / Administration	31-1-05 Balliet	31-3-01 Beck	31-2-03 Butler	31-3-02 Crawford	31-2-01 Devine	31-1-01 Engler
41000	Personnel	\$ 128,565	\$ 167,592	\$ 107,310	\$ 113,139	\$ 192,836	\$ 331,763	\$ 253,423
42111	Mileage - Personal	862	180	520	8	205	474	-
42112	Other Travel	215	12	2	2	10	-	-
43213	Telephone (Mobile)	173	243	29	243	258	243	243
43412	Janitorial Services	-	1,785	1,960	1,204	2,128	-	1,456
43421	Purchased Personnel	-	64	-	4	1,747	-	-
45111	Stockroom Supplies	410	1,764	668	634	2,068	1,385	7,167
45254	Other Postage	27,000	20,607	11,000	15,000	30,000	-	33,000
45281	Other Operating Supplies	5,725	3,243	2,086	1,401	3,291	4,124	4,240
45312	Maint. & Rep - Mats	971	666	-	-	-	-	-
46111	Telephone	-	899	2,533	3,011	6,355	387	1,931
46112	Fuel	-	730	-	542	1,981	-	-
46113	Electricity	-	3,741	2,009	1,710	5,764	-	6,658
46114	Water/Sewer	-	-	-	-	-	-	234
46311	Maint. & Repair Services	611	2,134	2,337	1,361	2,790	1,461	2,874
46411	Office Rental	-	25,150	25,467	26,400	43,458	-	-
46421	Equipment Rental	-	794	794	794	794	-	2,683
46511	Personnel Development	200	-	-	-	-	-	-
46821	Association Dues	490	-	-	-	-	-	-
46863	Banking Services	-	-	-	46	-	-	-
46866	Other Op. Expenses	-	-	-	-	30	-	-
47000	Capital Expenditures	-	2,701	-	1,001	6,557	964	-
	Total Expense	\$ 165,223	\$ 232,304	\$ 156,715	\$ 166,499	\$ 300,272	\$ 340,799	\$ 313,909
	# of Employees Cost/Employee		3 \$77,435	2 \$78,358	2 \$83,249	3 \$100,091	6.5 \$52,431	5 \$62,782

**MDC Cost Breakout by Object Code**

**Exhibit II**  
**Page 2 of 2**

31-1-07 Halal	31-2-02 Hammond	31-3-03 Harding	31-1-04 Leh	31-1-03 Manescu	31-1-06 Maura	31-1-02 Merlo	Unknown	31-1-08 Rapp	Total
\$ 215,272	\$ 311,552	\$ 137,884	\$ 184,519	\$ 295,653	\$ 218,744	\$ 256,353	\$ -	\$ 134,197	\$ 3,048,802
808	99	845	94	-	-	-	-	314	4,409
85	74	9	30	-	-	-	-	6	444
-	29	252	29		213	29	1,359	243	3,587
1,456	1,176	1,344	1,344	1,092	1,827	3,503	(18)	1,456	21,713
76	168	114	-	-	2	405	80	-	2,660
1,206	1,400	558	1,332	1,306	692	1,046	411	561	22,607
14,000	26,000	13,044	17,000	-	17,000	34,000		11,500	269,151
2,903	3,035	4,416	3,288	4,158	2,681	1,502	15,936	2,222	64,250
-	-	-	-	-	-	36	-	14	1,687
716	1,581	2,853	2,668	1,792	2,364	2,088	1,694	2,007	32,878
-	-	1,602	-	-	-	3,370	916	-	9,142
4,470	5,040	3,200	2,521	10,313	2,544	6,610	(662)	2,256	56,173
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	234
2,195	3,099	2,000	2,615	1,936	1,657	2,019	9,543	2,090	40,722
21,780	45,793	27,038	43,458	42,763	20,836	66,704	-	27,395	416,242
794	794	794	794	2,518	794	2,548	-	807	15,700
200	-	-	225	-	-	-	-	-	625
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	490
25	60	-	5	2,717	-	-	-	-	2,853
-	-	-	-	4,620	-	220	340	68	5,278
1,493	823	-	-	-	-	-	539	-	14,078
\$ 267,479	\$ 400,723	\$ 195,952	\$ 259,921	\$ 368,867	\$ 269,354	\$ 380,433	\$ 30,138	\$ 185,135	\$ 4,033,723
4	4.5	2.5	3.5	6	3	5		2	
\$66,870	\$89,050	\$78,381	\$74,263	\$61,478	\$89,785	\$76,087		\$92,567	



Office of the Court Administrator  
Lehigh County Courthouse  
455 W. Hamilton Street  
Allentown PA 18101-1614

Phone 610.782.3998  
Fax 610.820.3093

Susan T. Schellenberg  
Court Administrator  
[susanschellenberg@lehighcounty.org](mailto:susanschellenberg@lehighcounty.org)

**To: Thomas Slonaker, County Controller; John A. Falk, Deputy Controller**

**From: Susan T. Schellenberg**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "STS", is written over the "From" line.

**Date: October 26, 2010**

**Re: Response to Recommendation #2 of the Comments on the Addendum to the Summary Report-Magisterial District Court Offices-Decennial Reorganization**

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to respond to the recommendations contained in the above-referenced Addendum. Here are my responses to the recommendations:

*Recommendation #1*

The Court will consider establishing separate cost centers within the court budget. It will be one of the indicators that the Court uses in monitoring expenses and workload. The Court will also work with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) in developing weighted caseload measures, which will further increase our ability to monitor our workload effectively.

*Recommendation #2*

District Justice Administrator Gordon Roberts contacted Joe Mittleman, the Director of Judicial Programs for the AOPC, regarding the possibility of co-locating two MDJs from different districts into the same facility. Mr. Mittleman responded quickly. He indicated that several counties have made similar consolidation requests. The Supreme Court has taken these requests for physically co-locating offices under consideration. The specific issue that the Court will be considering is whether the Court will permit what is being called co-location of magisterial district judges in the same office, which would result in one of the judges having his office outside of the district from which he/she was elected. When we receive a decision from the Supreme Court, we will inform the Controller's Office.