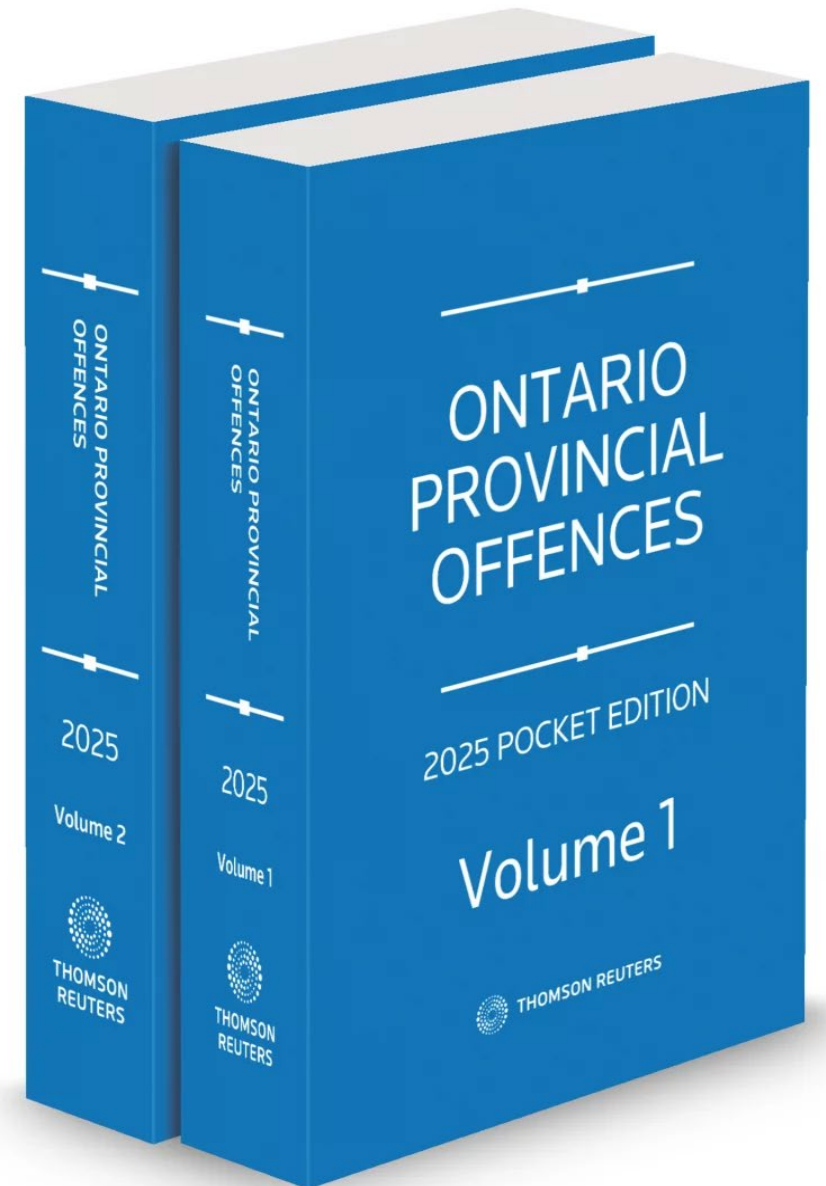


Provincial Offences in Rural Ontario



Purpose

- Share the municipal challenges of administering the provincial offences program in small courts
 - Provide updates on ongoing advocacy
-

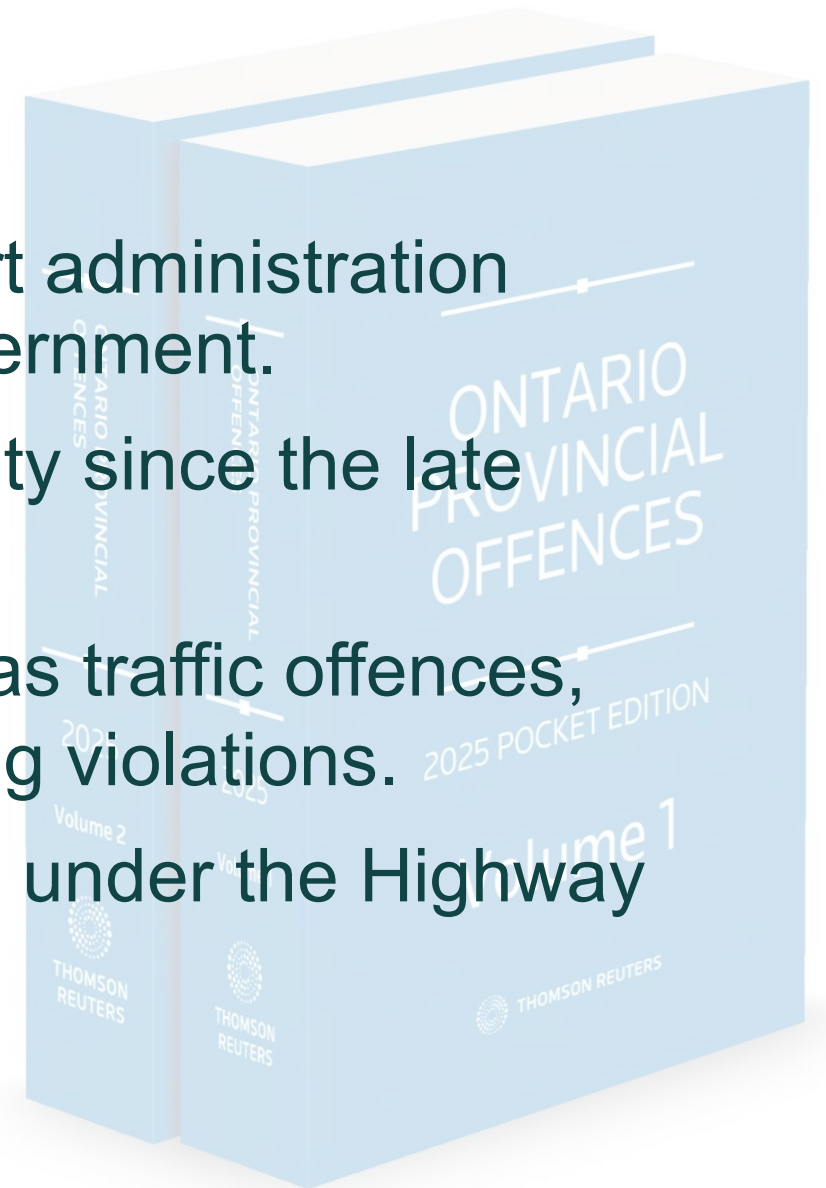


Municipal Court Managers Association of Ontario

- Collaborates with provincial offence staff to ensure the efficient and customer-friendly delivery of court administration across Ontario
- Works directly with the Ministry of the Attorney General to modernize and streamline provincial offence services
- Represents court administrators across the province, with specialized interest committees, such as fine collection, to address key administration challenges and opportunities

Provincial Offences

- Just over 50 municipalities provide court administration services on behalf of the provincial government.
- Municipalities have had this responsibility since the late 1990s.
- Prosecutes non-criminal charges such as traffic offences, trespassing charges, and liquor licensing violations.
- Most provincial offence fines are issued under the Highway Traffic Act.

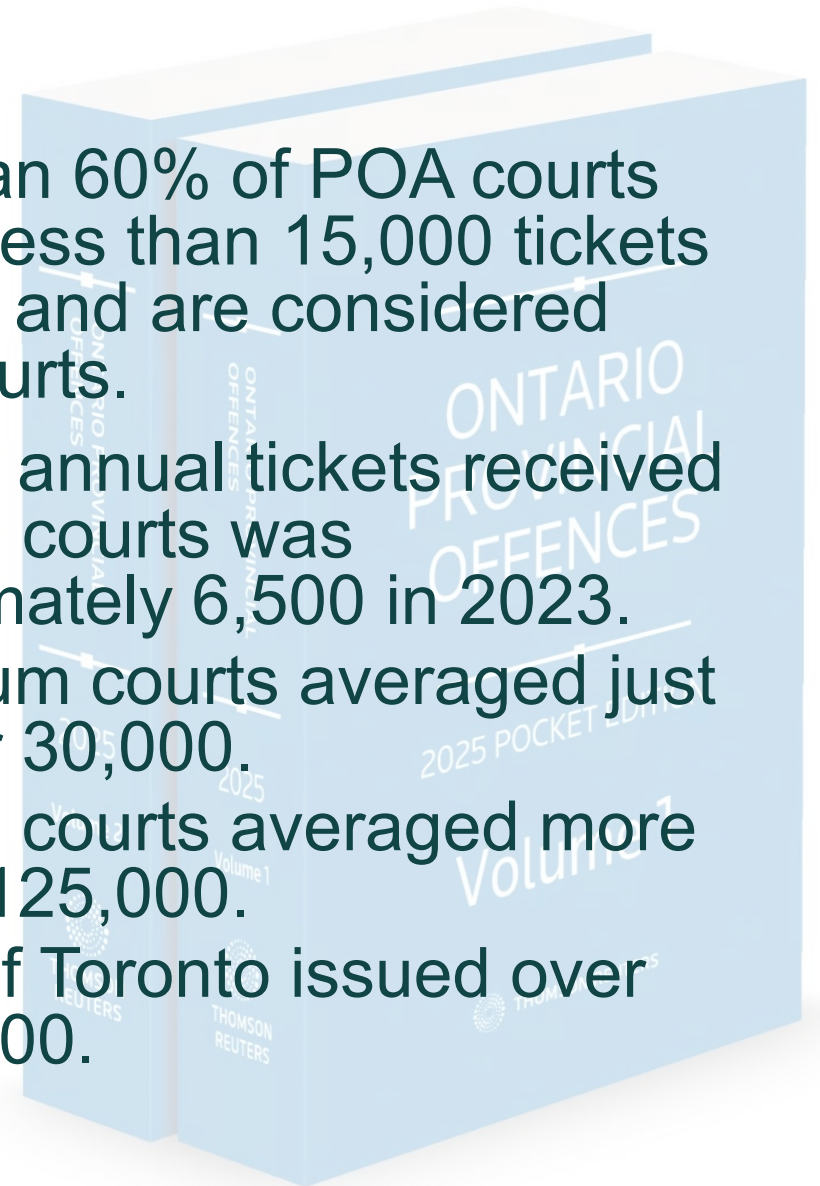


Small Court Engagement

In late 2024, MCMA and AMO collaborated with small courts across Ontario on engagement to better understand their issues and learning opportunities, aiming to improve administration and fine collection outcomes

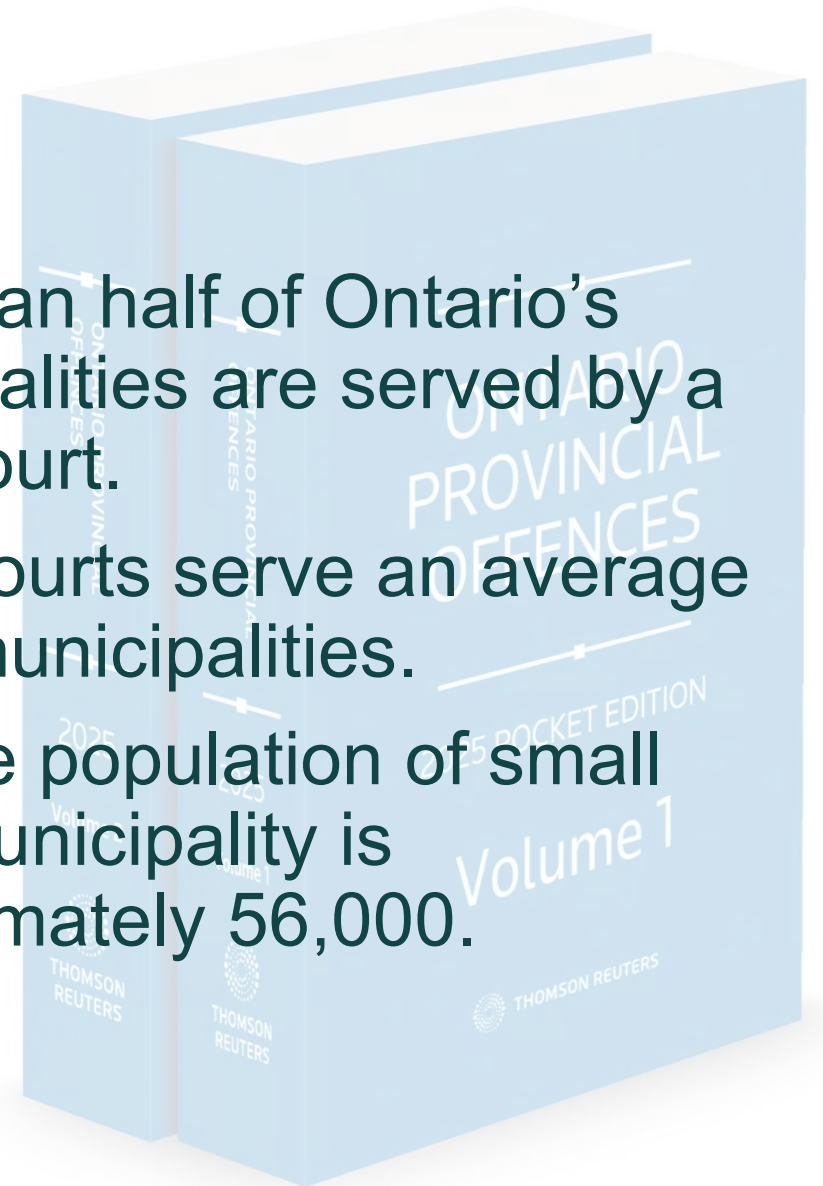
Total Tickets Filed in Small Courts

- More than 60% of POA courts receive less than 15,000 tickets per year and are considered small courts.
- Average annual tickets received for small courts was approximately 6,500 in 2023.
 - Medium courts averaged just under 30,000.
 - Large courts averaged more than 125,000.
 - City of Toronto issued over 700,000.



Municipal Details

- More than half of Ontario's municipalities are served by a small court.
- Small courts serve an average of 8.5 municipalities.
- Average population of small court municipality is approximately 56,000.



Staffing

- Average small court has 4.6 staff.
- More than 30% of small courts have a full-time prosecutor.



Finances

- Most small courts have difficulty collecting outstanding fines.
- Average known value of outstanding fines is \$11.5 million.



FIR Reporting (2022)

- Fines fund operations and were intended to supplement municipal revenues.
- One third of small courts reported more expenses than revenues.
- Small courts brought in ~8% more revenue than costs.

Revenues

- Average small court annual revenues:
\$1,105,027.30



Expenses

- Average small court annual revenues:
\$1,024,386.07



Common Challenges

Judicial Resources

- Central issue expressed by municipalities
- Criminal courts are prioritized over POA courts

Court Backlog

- Some municipalities note a sizeable backlog and increase in withdrawn charges

Unpaid Fines

- Nearly \$2 billion in unpaid fines
- Many believe it is nearly impossible to collect, but costs to administer continue

Common Challenges, Cont'd.

Public Confidence

- Ontarians more likely to engage with POA than criminal courts
- Province and municipalities need to act on a lack of public confidence in justice system

Data

- Limited province-wide data to demonstrate issues

Ticket Issuance

- Court administrators note that ticket issuance is below pre-COVID levels

Ongoing Advocacy

- Challenges are not new, but they have been exacerbated by broader fiscal challenges facing the municipal sector.
- To address these concerns, AMO has put forward several solutions to make improvements, including:
 - Engage in a broader conversation on the municipal-provincial fiscal framework;
 - Conduct a third-party review of the provincial offences system;
 - Explore greater use of administrative penalties to prevent contributing to the already overburdened court system; and
 - Help municipalities address challenges with unpaid fines.

