# Program Summary

A review and analysis of the data and program descriptions supports the conclusion that the arbitration system in Illinois is operating consistent with policy makers' initial expectations for the program. Parties to arbitration proceedings are working to settle their differences without significant court intervention. The aggressive scheduling of arbitration hearing dates induces early settlements by requiring the parties to carefully manage the case prior to an arbitration hearing. Because arbitration hearings are held within one year of the filing or transfer of the case to arbitration, most jurisdictions can dispose of approximately 85% of the arbitration caseload within one year of case filing.

Arbitration encourages dispositions earlier in the life of cases, helping courts operate more efficiently. Statewide figures show that only a small number of the cases filed or transferred into arbitration proceed to an arbitration hearing, and an even smaller number of cases proceed to trial. Arbitration-eligible cases are resolved and disposed prior to hearing in ways that do not require a significant amount of court time. Court-ordered dismissals, voluntary dismissals, settlement orders and default judgments typically require very little court time to process.

Statewide statistics also show that a large number of cases that do proceed to the arbitration hearing are terminated in a post-hearing proceeding. In such cases, the parties either petition the court to enter judgment on the arbitration award or remove the case from the arbitration calendar via another form of post-hearing termination, including settlement.

Not only has mandatory arbitration proven to be an effective means of disposing cases swiftly for litigants, but the overall success of the program is best exemplified in the fact that a statewide average of less than 2% of the cases filed in an arbitration program proceeded to trial in State Fiscal Year 2008.