



KING COUNTY DISTRICT COURT

2025 Annual Report



King County District Court **Mission Statement**

To serve the public by:

- Providing an accessible forum for the fair, efficient and understandable resolution of civil and criminal cases; and
- Maintaining an atmosphere of respect for the dignity of all individuals



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1. Chief Presiding Judge's Message

In 2025, King County District Court continued its work to enhance effective communication between court staff and Judges and other branches of government and to evaluate the Court's current processes, with the goal of improving our overall operations.

The Judges, Senior Leadership Team, and Courthouse Managers began the process of communication improvement through the Arbinger Institute – a global leadership development organization. We focused on transforming our individual mindsets to a more outward facing, positive, and effective way of thinking to spur better communication and organizational change.

The Court has also embarked on a LEAN process for many of our internal processes to help eliminate redundancies, improve efficiencies, and utilize our case management system for maximum benefit. The goal is to spend less time processing paperwork and more time with the litigants.

The Court also continues to strengthen our diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work by continuing our community engagement events and going through all Court processes with a DEI lens. This is an ongoing effort that will continue in 2026 and beyond.

In 2025, the Court experienced continued increases in our civil filings. We had an approximately 20% increase in civil filings from the previous year, and those cases are becoming more complex due to statutory changes. The Court is likely going to need additional resources to handle its civil caseload.

The Court's criminal caseload is nearing its pre-Covid levels, and the cases are becoming more complex. The addition of body-worn cameras for police has meant more attorney and court time is needed to review that footage. Additionally, the increased numbers of public defenders as required by the Washington State Supreme Court means that there is more litigation and thus an increased need for judicial resources.

The Court still struggles to find interpreters for our limited English proficiency (LEP) litigants because of nationwide interpreter shortages and compensation issues. We deeply appreciate the King County Council's additional funding for our interpreter needs, and we are exploring rules changes and Artificial Intelligence (AI) interpretation possibilities for the future.

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Chief Presiding Judge's Message

Continued

In addition to our guide on interaction with Federal Law Enforcement, the Court is conducting training for judges and staff on how to interact with Federal Law Enforcement and what to do if there is a civil arrest in the courthouse. This training will be conducted by the Washington Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).

Two Judges retired from King County District Court in 2025: Judge Gregg Hirakawa and Judge Lisa Paglisotti, both from the West Division. We will miss both experienced judges and wish them well in their retirement.

Bellevue Community Court launched in July 2025! We have had 15 participants opt into the program and 11 graduates as of January 31, 2026. We look forward to helping the people of Bellevue through this evidence-based therapeutic court.

Judge Rebecca C. Robertson
March 2026



[Click for Video](#)

Judge Rebecca C. Robertson discusses King County District Court's 2025 accomplishments and challenges for 2026



2. Court Services & Locations



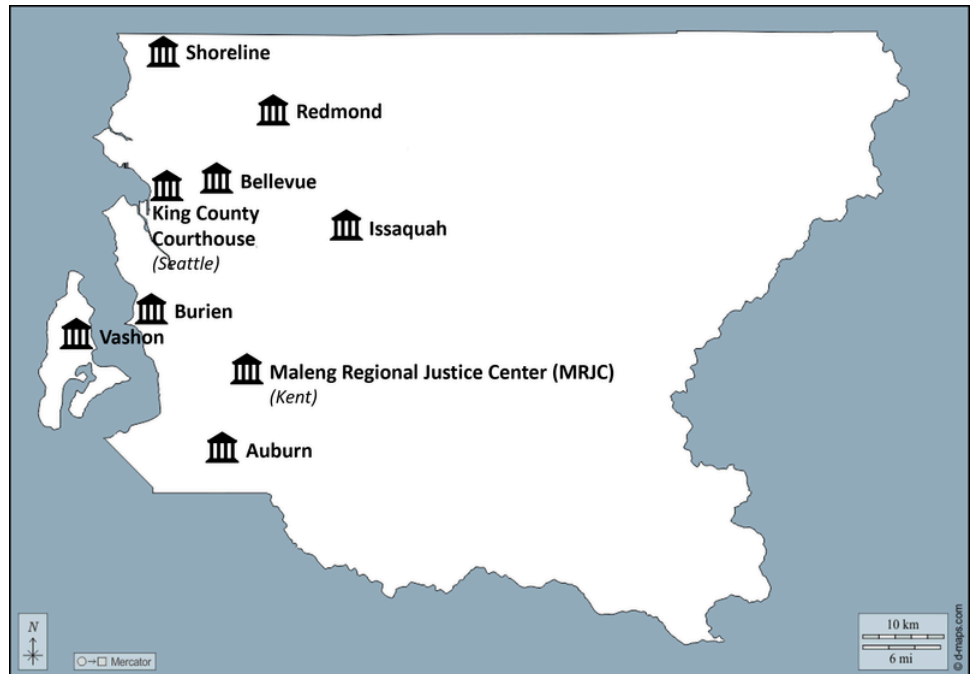
Overview

King County District Court's 25 elected judges hear a range of civil and criminal cases at locations throughout King County. The Court is one of the busiest courts in Washington, and is a leader in many areas involving public safety and access to justice.



Services

Courthouse locations



Base map provided by: https://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=44208&lang=en

As a court of limited jurisdiction, King County District Court is responsible for the following types of matters:

- Gross misdemeanor and misdemeanor criminal cases
- Felony first appearance hearings
- Protection orders (anti-harassment, stalking, domestic violence, sexual assault, extreme risk-temporary)
- Civil litigation matters (up to \$100,000 per claimant)
- Small claims (up to \$10,000)
- Name changes
- Search warrants
- Infractions (traffic, non-traffic and parking)
- Other civil matters (vehicle impound hearings, post judgment execution and post judgment enforcement proceedings, petitions for the return of seized animals)

King County District Court also:

- Is contracted to provide municipal court services for 13 cities across the County (see map on next page)
- Provides judge-supervised probation
- Operates several therapeutic courts, including Regional Mental Health Court; Regional Veterans Court; and Community Courts in Bellevue, Redmond and Shoreline-Kenmore
- Accepts applications for U.S. Passports at five courthouse locations



3. Contracting Cities

Thirteen cities throughout King County contract with King County District Court to provide their municipal court services.

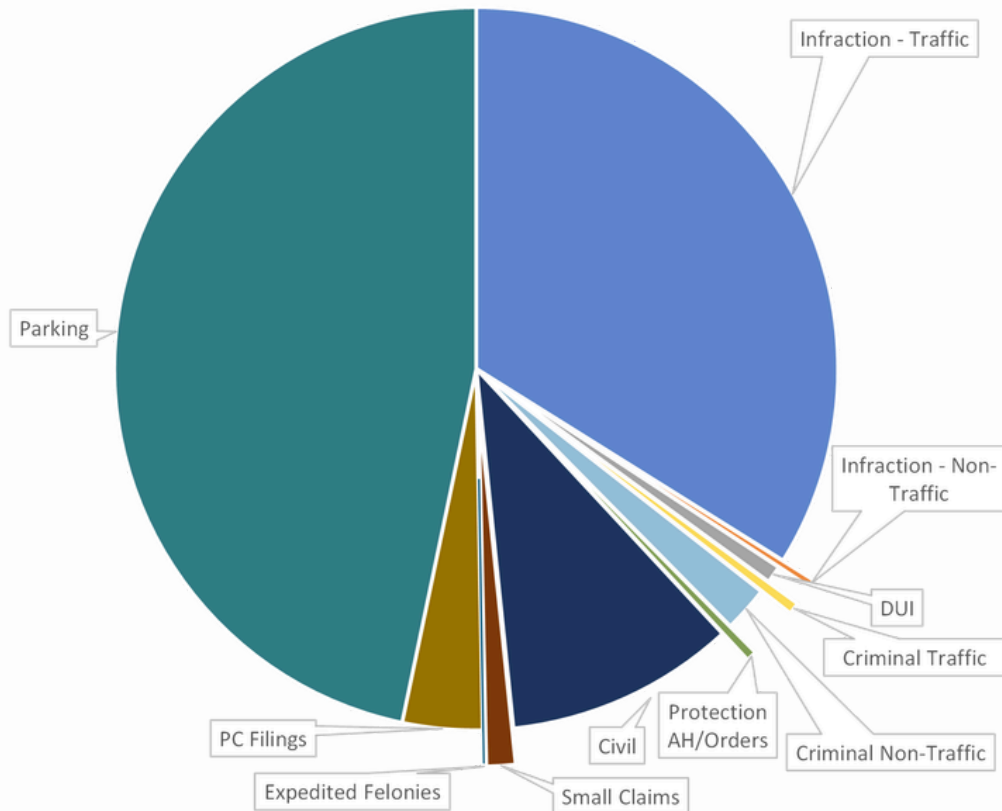


Base map provided by: https://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=44208&lang=en



4. 2025 Caseload Statistics

Total Cases Filed
277,884

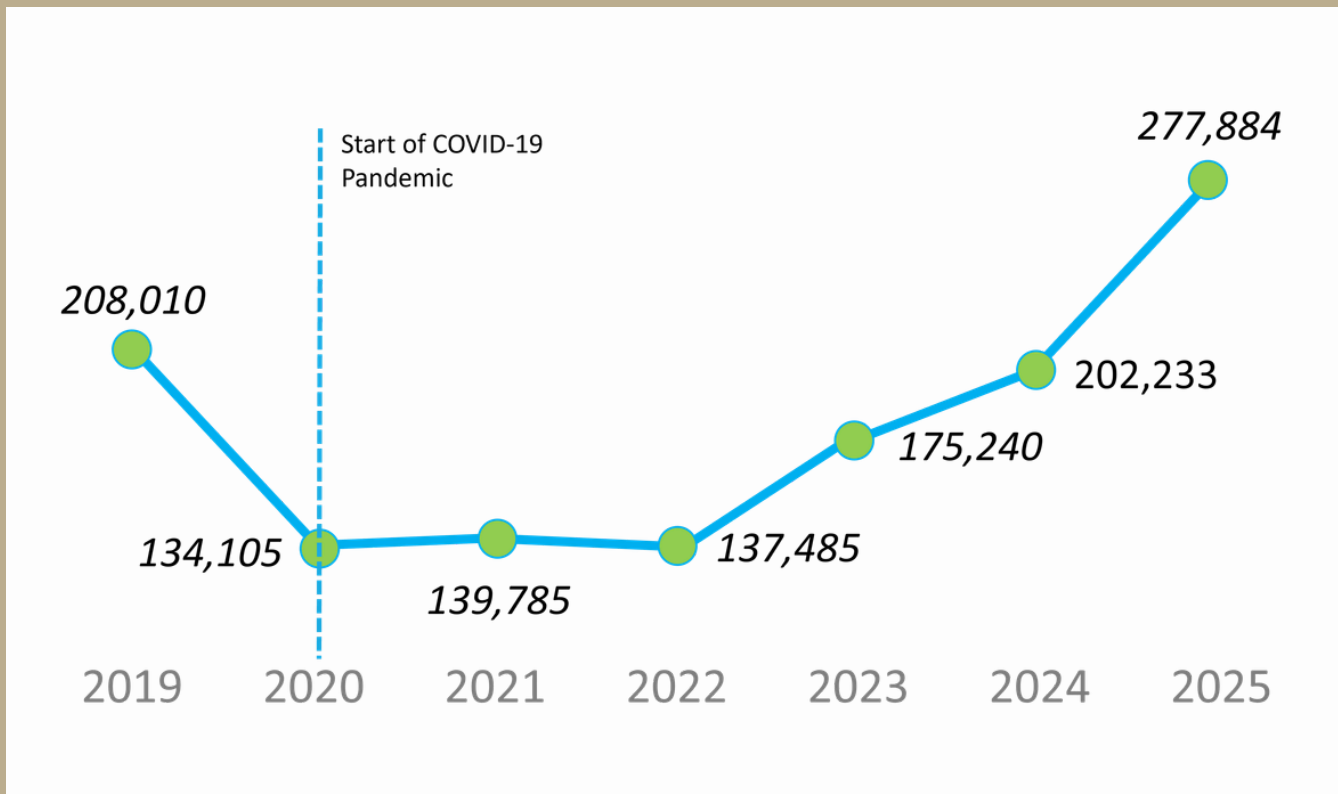


2025 Court Filings by Case Type

Case type	# of cases	Percent of total
Infraction - Traffic	94,194	33.9%
Infraction - Non-Traffic	970	0.3%
DUI	2,168	0.8%
Criminal Traffic	1,483	0.5%
Criminal Non-Traffic	5,701	2.1%
Protection AH/Orders	1,323	0.5%
Civil	28,548	10.3%
Small Claims	3,592	1.3%
Expedited Felonies	171	0.1%
PC Filings	9,928	3.6%
Parking	129,806	46.7%
TOTAL	277,884	100.0%



5. Caseload History: 2019 - 2025



Annual case filings in King County District Court increased by 37% from 2024 to 2025, driven primarily by an increase in photo-enforced tickets. Such tickets are filed in the parking category, in accordance with Washington state law.



6. Initiatives

King County District Court is committed to continuous improvement in our operations. In 2025, we undertook numerous actions to further enhance our service to the public while making the best use of limited public funding. Key initiatives for the year included:

- **Security enhancement projects** – To help ensure the safety and security of court users, staff and judges, District Court in 2025 implemented a range of capital improvements via a special one-year \$500,000 security funding allocation from King County. Projects included:
 - Vision-obscuring safety window film at all courthouse locations
 - Secured access to judicial chambers from and to the courtrooms at all courthouses
 - New alarm systems at the Burien and Issaquah courthouses
 - Holding cell cameras at the Shoreline and Issaquah courthouses
- **Lean process for operational improvements** – Building upon a 2024 pilot project, in 2025 District Court judges and staff undertook an extensive review of the Court's infractions body of work to identify ways we can serve the public more efficiently by streamlining the infractions process. In 2026 the Court will continue these lean process improvements for additional court services.
- **Call Center service improvements** – For calendar year 2025, the District Court Call Center served the public via 207,821 total phone calls, 7,482 emails and 4,510 online live chats. For faster, better service, the Court implemented several actions in the first half of 2025 that dramatically reduced call wait times (from an annual average of 129 minutes per call in 2024 to an annual average of 25 minutes per call in 2025 – an 81% reduction).
- **Online evidence management system pilot project** – Early in the year, District Court implemented a new web-based tool to make it easier for court users to submit digital evidence. The pilot was for Small Claims cases heard in Seattle. Court users have provided very positive feedback on the new tool.
- **Video court simultaneous interpretation** – To enhance access to justice for people needing language translation, while also reducing the length of court calendars, District Court implemented simultaneous interpretation on the Zoom videoconference platform in all courtrooms.
- **Service counter language translation improvements** – District Court deployed Pocketalk handheld language translation devices at all of our courthouse front counters to enable court users and court staff to communicate more effectively.



7. Judicial Changes

Departing Judges

Judge Gregg Hiramawa and Judge Lisa Paglisotti retired from the King County District Court bench in late 2025. The King County Council on January 27, 2026, appointed Judge Yvonne Chin and Judge Bardi Martin to fill the two judicial vacancies.



Judge Gregg Hiramawa
(retired)



Judge Lisa Paglisotti
(retired)



8. Judicial Statewide Leadership & Committees

King County District Court judges are actively engaged in the Washington judicial community, including participating in and leading a wide variety of boards and committees.



Board & Committee Memberships

- Board of Judicial Administration (BJA)
 - Alternatives to Incarceration Task Force
 - Judicial Needs Estimate Work Group
 - Legislative Committee
 - Trial Court Security Committee
- District & Municipal Court Judges Association (DMCJA)
 - Board of Governors
 - Conference Activities Committee
 - Council on Independent Courts
 - Diversity Committee
 - Education Committee
 - Executive Committee
 - Leadership Committee
 - Legislative Committee
 - Strategic Planning Subcommittee
 - Therapeutic Courts Committee
- Issaquah School District Law and Public Safety Advisory Committee
- Judicial Institute of Washington Advisory Board
- Washington Judges Foundation
- Washington State Supreme Court
 - Gender & Justice Commission
 - Minority and Justice Commission
 - Standards for Indigent Criminal Defense Task Force



Statewide & Regional Leadership

Judge Michael Finkle

- Behavioral Health Pattern Forms Subcommittee – Chair
- Competency Task Force – Co-Chair
- Courts of Limited Jurisdiction Pattern Forms Subcommittee - Chair
- Judicial Assistance Services Program – Vice Chair
- Washington State Association of Youth Courts – President
- Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) Well-Being Taskforce
 - Judiciary Workgroup and Government & Public Interest Workgroup – Chair
 - Report Writing Workgroup - Chair



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9. Judicial Awards & Presentations

King County District Court judges are recognized throughout King County and Washington state for their service and expertise. In 2025, this included:

- Receiving several awards for leadership and service
- Delivering numerous informative presentations and keynote addresses
- Serving as faculty members in a variety of local and national educational forums
- Participating in local service groups; volunteering in the community; and mentoring others



Awards

Judge Michael Finkle

- American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA), Washington Chapter, Recognition of Excellent Service

Judge Marcus Naylor

- District & Municipal Court Judges Association (DMCJA), President's Award

Judge Lisa O'Toole

- American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA), Distinguished Service Award



Presentations

King County District Court (KCDC) judges speak frequently on a wide range of topics, including court services and operations, judicial ethics, judicial independence and more. The groups and events that KCDC judges presented to in 2025 included the following:

- Access to Justice Conference
- City council meetings
- Community service agencies
- District & Municipal Court Judges Association (DMCJA)
- District & Municipal Court Management Association (DMCMA)
- Judicial College
- KOMO TV's "ARC Seattle" program
- Schools – grade schools, middle schools, and high schools
- Seattle University School of Law Access to Justice Institute
- University of Washington School of Law
- Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) Pro Tem Judge Training Program
- Washington State Legislature



10. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

King County District Court judges, managers and staff are working to create a diverse, engaged Court in which a persistent commitment to diversity, inclusion and belonging are core values.

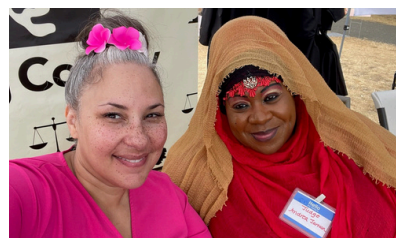
District Court's ongoing commitment to enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion is enshrined in its Local Rules. LARLJ 0.8, *Committees*, establishes a standing DEI Committee comprised of judges, directors, managers, court staff and probation staff. The DEI Committee is charged with developing DEI policies that affect the Court, the communities we serve, and the people working throughout District Court.



Community Outreach

A key part of the Court's DEI work is to educate and engage the public at community events throughout King County. We participated in the following 8 events in 2025:

- Kent International Festival – May 31
- Redmond Derby Days – July 12
- Umoja Fest (Judkins Park / Seattle) – August 2 & 3
- Kenmore Night Out – August 6
- Celebrate Shoreline – August 16
- MHS Day of Hope (New Holly / Seattle) – September 20
- B-Town Fiesta (Burien) – September 21
- Judge Charles V. Johnson Youth & Law Forum (Tukwila) – November 1





Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

Continued



Work Underway 2025 / 2026

- **Unsecured bond procedures** – To enhance access to justice for defendants from marginalized communities, who may lack financial resources, the Court is developing procedures regarding unsecured bonds
- **Education and awareness series** – The DEI Committee is planning presentations in 2026 to educate District Court Judges and staff on a range of DEI topics
- **Accessible written communications** – To help ensure people with visual challenges can fully participate in the justice system, the Court is working to ensure all of its written materials meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards regarding font size, contrast, etc.
- **DEI webpage** – A District Court webpage is being developed as a central source of court-related DEI information and resources for the public



[Click for Video](#)

Judge Karama H. Hawkins, 2025 District Court DEI Committee Chair discusses how the Court's DEI efforts enhance access to justice



11. Therapeutic Courts

King County District Court therapeutic courts seek to identify and address the underlying challenges of court participants that may contribute to further criminal activity. The goal is to build stronger and safer communities and reduce criminal recidivism. These specialty, problem-solving courts include:

- Bellevue Community Court
- Redmond Community Court
- Shoreline-Kenmore Community Court
- King County Regional Mental Health Court
- King County Regional Veterans Court



2025 Highlights

- **Bellevue Community Court launch** – King County District Court, City of Bellevue and the King County Library System’s Bellevue Library partnered to launch Bellevue Community Court and an associated Community Resource Center in July. Leaders from the three agencies welcomed the public at a Grand Opening Celebration on October 7, which coincided with the first two participant graduations from the program.
- **Shoreline-Kenmore Community Court 2025 celebration** – District Court, City of Shoreline and City of Kenmore celebrated Shoreline’s five years with community court and Kenmore’s two years at a special event in May.





Therapeutic Courts

Continued

	2025 Graduations	Active participants continuing as of 12/31/25
Regional Mental Health Court	25	146
Regional Veterans Court	13	21
Community Courts	57	75



[Click for Video](#)

Bellevue TV highlights how Community Court helps people make positive changes in their lives



[Click for Video](#)

Shoreline-Kenmore Community Court 2025 celebration featuring Court and City leaders discussing the program's benefits to individuals and the overall community



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12. Judges



Pictured left to right: Raul Martinez, Corinna Harn, Lisa Paglisotti (retired), Fa'amomoi Masaniai, Kristin Shotwell, Rebecca C. Robertson, Peter Peaquin, Jill Klinge, Lisa O'Toole, Kevin Peck, Matthew York, Leah Taguba, Brian Todd, Elizabeth D. Stephenson, Kuljinder Dhillon, Marcus Naylor, Karama H. Hawkins, Nathaniel Green

Not pictured: Virginia Amato, Yvonne Chin, Michael Finkle, Michelle Gehlsen, Laurel Gibson, Andrea S. Jarmon, Rhonda Laumann, Bardi Martin

East Division

- Judge Michael Finkle
- Judge Michelle Gehlsen
- Judge Jill Klinge
- Judge Marcus Naylor
- Judge Lisa O'Toole
- Judge Peter J. Peaquin
- Judge Kevin Peck

South Division

- Judge Virginia Amato
- Judge Laurel Gibson
- Judge Nathaniel Green
- Judge Corinna Harn
- Judge Andrea S. Jarmon
- Judge Rhonda Laumann
- Judge Fa'amomoi Masaniai
- Judge Elizabeth D. Stephenson
- Judge Leah Taguba
- Judge Brian Todd
- Judge Matthew York

West Division

- Judge Yvonne Chin
- Judge Kuljinder Dhillon
- Judge Karama H. Hawkins
- Judge Bardi Martin
- Judge Raul Martinez
- Judge Rebecca C. Robertson
- Judge Kristin Shotwell



13. Court Leadership

Executive Committee



**Judge Rebecca C.
Robertson**

Chief
Presiding Judge



**Judge Corinna
Harn**

Assistant Chief
Presiding Judge



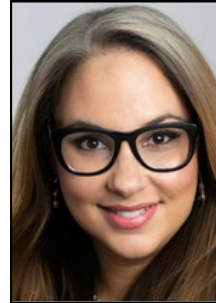
**Judge Lisa
O'Toole**

East Division
Presiding Judge



**Judge Brian
Todd**

South Division
Presiding Judge



**Judge Karama H.
Hawkins**

West Division
Presiding Judge

Senior Leadership Team

- Othniel Palomino, Chief Administrative Officer
- Tina Gill, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
- Regina Alexander, Probation Director
- Heather Dean, Budget Director
- Kim Howells, Operations Director - Cities
- Enrique Kuttemplon, Information Technology Director
- Patrick Wells, Operations Director - State
- Kevin Whitley, Central Services Director

