

AFIS

KING COUNTY'S AUTOMATED FINGERPRINT IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM THE AFIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIR

On behalf of the AFIS Advisory Committee, it is with pride and pleasure that we present the 2024 annual report for the King County Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) Program. As with the reports from years past, we are happy to share with you this year's achievements and successes, progress with new and existing programs, and advancements in technology.

The King County Regional AFIS Program, funded by a county-wide, voter-approved property tax levy, provides fingerprint identification services to the various agencies throughout King County. Utilizing advancements in biometric identification technology and time-tested techniques of fingerprint analysis, the AFIS program is a critical component to criminal investigations across the county. This report provides the reader with a comprehensive, yet barely scratching the surface, overview of the work, projects, and positive impacts on law enforcement efforts throughout the region.

In this report you will find detailed information regarding the various work done throughout the last year, including key milestones, technology upgrades implemented, collaborations between the law enforcement agencies across the county, and the overall effectiveness of the AFIS system. This report should give the reader a clearer understanding of the AFIS program and its commitment to advancement, training, and engagement with those we serve, as well as our dedication to remaining on the leading edge of forensic technology.

With the ever changing and developing landscape of biometrics and the case law associated, the King County Regional AFIS Program remains fully committed to its mission of providing industry-leading fingerprint identification services that contribute to our communities' safety, security, privacy, and well-being. We thank our partners, stakeholders, and the dedicated professionals who make this program successful.

With the AFIS levy up for renewal by popular vote this year, it is important that the public is well informed about our mission and the critical role AFIS serves in public safety. Please go to www.kingcounty.gov/afis for more information about AFIS.

Thank you for your continued support.

James Britt
Technology Integration Captain
Seattle Police Department
King County AFIS Advisory Committee Chair



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AFIS MISSION

The Regional AFIS Program promotes public safety and contributes to crime reduction by providing fingerprint identification services and technology to agencies throughout King County.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

King County's Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) is a county wide program that provides the staff and technology to support fingerprint identification services for all cities and unincorporated areas of King County. A regional approach allows for this enhanced service to be shared by all agencies.

Objectives

- To quickly identify individuals, resolve identity related issues, and ensure criminal history records are accurately attributed and reported.
- To collect and identify crime scene related finger and palm prints to aid investigations and provide evidence in court.

Benefits

- Provides expert staff and up-to-date technology at an overall lower expense than if agencies funded their own units.
- Creates a high quality, local database of fingerprint information against which all local agency prints can be searched.
- Leads to faster completion time for cases and arrest identifications.

Technology

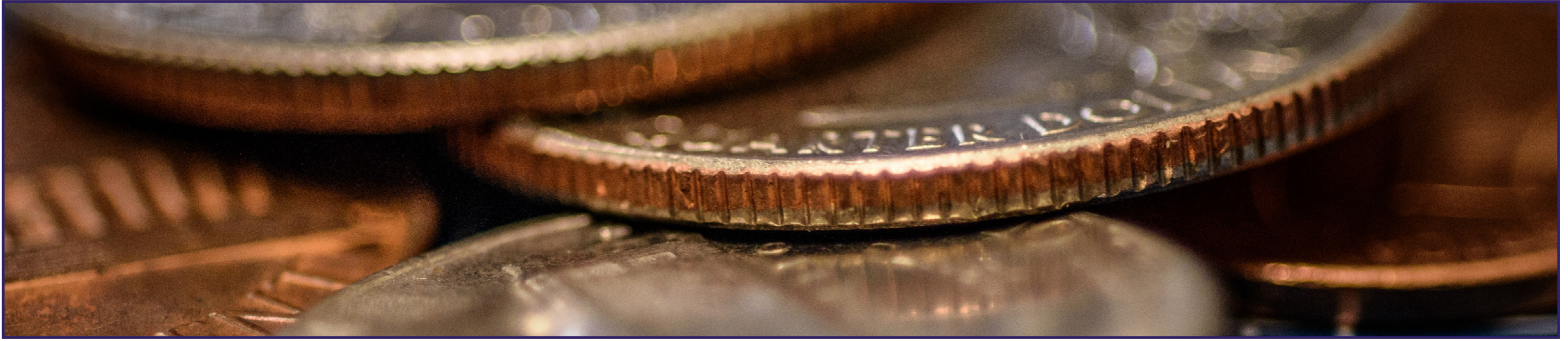
- The AFIS database stores nearly 3 million records for matching to incoming and unidentified prints.
- 56 Livescan devices deployed throughout the region capture prints, photos, and demographics. The data collected is transmitted electronically to the local, state, and federal identification systems.
- 220 Mobile ID devices deployed in the field to assist in quickly identify people without the need to transport them to a secondary location.

Services

- Collection of booking fingerprints, mug shots, and DNA
- Arrestee and applicant identification
- Criminal history reporting
- Crime scene and evidence processing
- Latent print examination
- Assistance with identity theft issues
- Identification of deceased and unknown individuals
- Technology management
- Customer support and training



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



Since 1986, the King County AFIS program has been funded by a voter-approved property tax levy. The current levy was approved in August 2018 and ran through the end of 2024.

Although law enforcement agencies are typically responsible for the costs associated with performing their own criminal identification functions, the investment in technology, staff, equipment, and other resources would be costly for any single jurisdiction to finance independently. This regional approach provides agencies throughout King County with core fingerprint services and technology, leaving local resources for other priorities.

In 2024, the AFIS levy rate was 2.9 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. This was approximately \$20.30 for the owner of a home valued at \$700,000.

The 2019-2024 levy was a status quo financial plan that assumed no major new investments. However, through conscientious financial management and cost reductions, the AFIS program has been able to complete significant capital projects. Staff were moved from the King County Courthouse to a more centralized location in Renton, the AFIS computer was converted to a modern cloud-based system with improved matching capability, and we're currently working to update the fingerprint capture devices deployed to agencies throughout King County.

Typically, the AFIS program would seek levy renewal during the final year of a levy period. However, the AFIS program has been able to extend funds from our current levy an additional year. No taxes will be collected for the AFIS program in 2025, and we will continue to operate off of budgetary savings.

2024 Revenue and Expenditures

| Revenue | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Property Taxes | \$23,893,178 |
| Investment Interest | \$1,800,639 |
| Other / Misc. | \$7,074 |
| Total | \$25,700,891 |
| Expenditures | |
| Salaries & Benefits | \$10,741,991 |
| City of Seattle* | \$4,000,256 |
| Intragovernmental Overhead | \$3,398,191 |
| Supplies & Services | \$1,780,835 |
| Capital Equipment | \$44,966 |
| Total | \$19,966,239 |

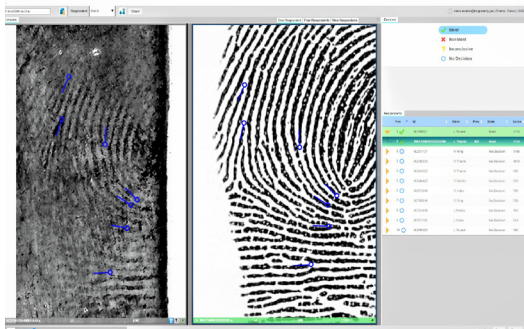
*The AFIS levy funds an AFIS unit at Seattle Police to cover agency workload. The Seattle AFIS unit has its own budget which is approved by KC AFIS. This budget includes salaries, benefits, supplies, and training for 35 staff members.

AFIS TECHNOLOGY



AFIS Database

The AFIS database contains nearly 3 million searchable records and is used to store and match prints collected from devices connected to our network. King County AFIS also maintains a connection to the fingerprint databases of Washington State Patrol, Western Identification Network, and the FBI. Prints not identified in our local database may be searched through these external databases. Prints recovered at crime scenes or on evidence can be searched through the database to determine who may have come into contact with a surface related to a criminal investigation. Unsolved crime scene prints are retained in the database and are continually searched against incoming records in hopes of providing resolution to older cases.



Mobile Identification

Mobile Identification devices are handheld fingerprint scanners that allow officers in the field to quickly identify individuals without the need to transport them to a secondary location. Field identification enables officers to make critical decisions on whether to detain subjects. The prints are automatically searched through the King County AFIS database as well as the Washington State Patrol database and FBI's Repository for Individuals of Special Concern (RISC), with results returned directly to the officer in the field. In keeping with privacy laws, prints taken on the Mobile ID are not saved on the device or in the databases through which they are searched. 5,922 Mobile ID searches were performed in 2024.



Livescan

56 livescan terminals are deployed throughout the county in police, correctional, and government facilities. These terminals electronically capture and transmit fingerprint and palm print images directly to the King County AFIS system. The prints are searched through the database and compared to prints on file. Records are then transmitted, along with any criminal or applicant information, to the Washington State Patrol. This process can now be completed in a matter of minutes compared to the days or weeks it used to take when using ink and paper. Levy funds supply the livescan terminals at no cost to the agencies. In 2024, our fleet of livescan terminals collected over 57,000 sets of fingerprints.



PROGRAM SERVICES - IDENTIFICATION



Livescan terminals throughout the county transmit finger and palm print images to the AFIS database for identification 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Prints may be taken for criminal bookings, license applications, or background checks.

King County AFIS provides Identification Technicians to take prints at the King County Correctional Facility, Maeleng Regional Justice Center, and the King County Youth and Family Services Center. Our Technicians also respond to area hospitals to print patients that are unable to identify themselves. By ensuring that the highest quality prints are taken we increase our ability to identify people and to potentially match them to prints recovered at crime scenes.

Our Tenprint Examiners compare incoming submissions to those in our existing database, and any discrepancies between the information being used and the information in the database is reported to the agency submitting the prints. This process ensures that identity is quickly determined, and criminal history and warrants are properly associated with the correct individuals.

Information Specialists research arrest information for inclusion on state and federal rap sheets, ensuring that the courts, law enforcement, and licensing agencies have access to up-to-date criminal history information. These records are relied upon for criminal investigations, applicant backgrounding, and sentencing determinations.

Our identification section also assists with the identification of unknown deceased individuals and works with victims of identity theft to clear up criminal history that may have incorrectly become associated with them.

2024 Identification Section Stats

Criminal Bookings Performed by AFIS Staff: 17,302

Unknown Patient Cases: 82

Criminal Bookings Received: 37,812

Deceased Examinations: 681

Tenprint Records Searched: 57,415

Mobile ID Searches: 5,922

PROGRAM SERVICES - FORENSICS



Prints left after a surface is touched are known as *latent* prints because they are not typically visible without some form of physical or chemical processing.

King County AFIS Processing Technicians and Latent Print Examiners respond to crime scenes throughout King County to recover latent prints from items that may have been touched during the commission of a crime.

We also have a state-of-the-art processing lab where agencies can send their evidence to be processed. In a lab setting, examiners are able to utilize a wider range of processing techniques and equipment to develop and preserve the latent prints on an item.

Once developed and preserved, latent prints are compared to the prints of known subjects. Depending on the circumstances of the case, they may be manually compared to specific individuals or searched through the entire AFIS database. They may also be searched through the databases of Washington State Patrol, Western Identification Network (AK, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WY), and FBI.

Unsolved latents can be stored in the AFIS computer and searched against all future known prints that are submitted. This potentially creates new leads in investigations that may have previously gone cold.

Upon conclusion of any work, comprehensive case reports are prepared by our Latent Administrative Unit and supplied to investigators.

The Seattle Photography Unit provide specialized photo services for forensic and public relations purposes. The AFIS levy provides supplemental funding to this units in light of the volume of forensic photography work performed for the program.

2024 Forensic Section Stats

Evidence Items Processed: 12,219

Crime Scene Responses: 2,391

Latent Cases Submitted: 4,237

DNA Samples Collected: 1,522

PROGRAM SUPPORT



Support, Training, and Community Involvement

The AFIS Program provides technical and helpdesk support for all users of the AFIS, livescan, and mobile ID services. Staff also coordinate fingerprint related training for officers, facilitate service-related communication among stakeholders, and organize participation in community events.

As a regional and levy-based program, it's vital that information about the program is shared with the public. This is done through school science programs, festivals, community events, career conferences, and National Night Out events. AFIS staff share information about their job functions and why fingerprint identification is so important.

Management & Technology

AFIS program management oversees daily operations, acquisitions, budget, and the use and maintenance of fingerprint technology throughout the county. The management team ensures compliance with state and national security standards, administers program initiatives, and responds to issues in the ever-changing biometric and forensic disciplines.



Looking Ahead:

In 2025, the AFIS Program will be deploying an updated fleet of livescan devices throughout the county to replace out-of-date devices currently deployed. Prior to completion of this annual report, a renewal levy was passed by voters which provides program funding for an additional seven-year term starting in 2026.

NOTABLE CASES 2024



Police were dispatched to a Seattle shooting where they found a victim laying in a parking lot with several gunshot wounds to the upper body. Information obtained from witnesses at the scene indicated that the victim was shot while in the driver's seat of a vehicle and had then been pushed out into the parking lot. Witnesses placed the shooter in the vehicle's front passenger seat. The vehicle was recovered 5 days later in Tacoma and returned to Seattle for processing. Three prints were developed on the passenger side visor and identified to a subject in the King County AFIS database.

Officers were dispatched to a call involving the assault of a bus driver. Upon arrival the victim was found to be deceased on the sidewalk. Witnesses stated that a subject pepper sprayed the driver, leading to a physical fight where the victim was stabbed multiple times. AFIS staff responded to the scene to process the bus for fingerprint evidence. Prints were recovered from the interior of a window that the subject had been seen on video trying to close. One impression was identified to a subject determined to be involved in the homicide.



Officers were asked by paramedics to respond to their location to assist with a young female patient who was found barely clothed on the side of a busy intersection in 40-degree weather. She was making incoherent statements and was unable to identify herself. Officers used their MobileID scanner and were able to determine her identity through fingerprint matches in the King County and WSP AFIS databases. That information was used to get her the resources that she needed.





Witnesses reported that a man, armed with a knife, forcibly removed an 80-year-old woman from her SUV, hitting her as he fled the scene in her car. Despite life-saving efforts, the victim died at the scene. Police located the stolen vehicle and the victim's deceased dog at a nearby park, and requested AFIS staff respond to process for fingerprint evidence. A cellphone belonging to the victim was recovered at the scene, and latent prints developed on it were searched through the King County Regional AFIS Database, hitting to a subject that was unknown to investigators at the time. The subject was arrested the following day with the key to the victim's vehicle still in his pocket.

A suspect violently attempted to break into a Bellevue home as the homeowner hid in their bathroom and called 911. The suspect fired his gun through the home's front door, ultimately breaking in through the garage. The suspect stole the victim's vehicle by driving through the closed garage doors and driving off at a high rate of speed. The suspect fled to Woodinville where he carjacked another vehicle. The suspect was eventually stopped by police and taken into custody. Latent prints recovered in the original vehicle were used to confirm that the arrested subject was the same person that originally stole the vehicle from Bellevue.



A Kent man was awoken by the feeling of being struck on the arm with something hard. When he opened his eyes he found an unknown woman stabbing him repeatedly with a knife. Despite serious injuries, the man was able to fend the woman off, flee the residence, and call 911. AFIS responded to the scene to process for fingerprints and recovered several, including prints from a knife on the man's dresser. The prints were identified to a known suspect in case. She is currently in custody awaiting trial.

KING COUNTY REGIONAL



IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM



King County

what types of patterns do you have?



loop



arch



whorl

