

Annual Report 2021

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Message from the Presiding Judge and Chief Administrative Officer

We are pleased to present to you King County Superior Court's 2021 Annual Report. This summarizes our court's activity during the first full year in which the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically impacted our world. It serves to demonstrate how the dedicated judicial officers and staff who work in the court were able to rise to the challenge and employ incredible ingenuity to ensure continued access to the court and service to the public. By rapidly adopting video technology and changes in court processes, we were able to expand access to justice in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our court is just one of many others across the country with similar stories of transformational change undertaken during this unprecedented time in the history of courts and court management.

The bedrock of all justice is access. If your court is closed, if your interpreter is not available, if your trial is not scheduled, then for the family law litigant, child welfare case, the defendant in jail, the business seeking relief—justice is effectively denied. Across the United States, the emergency of the pandemic caused most courts across the country to close to all but the most emergent of litigants.

During 2021, King County Superior Court remained open with new processes and procedures. We held over 300 criminal and civil jury trials, 1,000 bench trials, and countless hearings. By focusing on our core value of access and safeguarding rights, we believe that were able to take a principled approach to creating rapid changes with new processes with video technology.

"By rapidly adopting video technology and changes in court processes, we were able to expand access to justice in response to the COVID-19 pandemic."

This technology allowed jurors to take part in jury selection without traveling to the courthouse. Parties, witnesses, and interpreters could participate in court proceedings remotely. Court programs, such as the Family Law Facilitators, continued to provide services to unrepresented litigants through phone consultations and improved website resources, and they reviewed forms for simple divorce via email so parties were no longer required to come in to get a dissolution. Juvenile Court probation counselors expanded their work with youth by continuing to meet remotely, providing connections to needed community services. Students who might otherwise have lost connections during remote learning were assisted through collaborative programs such as the Community Attendance Support Team. These steps kept students in contact with community during a time of dramatic upheaval to "normal" daily life.

It is our good fortune to have a set of exceptionally smart, capable court leaders in our chief judges and director team who spent countless hours planning, refining, and implementing new and innovative ways of doing business, then continually modifying those efforts when circumstances changed, or they hit a roadblock. Without question, we could not have made the changes detailed in this report without our deeply dedicated bench and staff who made this transformation happen.

Hon. Jim Rogers *Superior Court Judge Presiding Judge, 2019-2021*

Ms. Linda Ridge *Chief Administrative Officer*



COVID-19 Budget Approval

Funding Enables KCSC, DJA to Keep Justice Moving

In 2021, the King County Council approved funding for Superior Court to hire the temporary judicial officers, bailiffs, courtroom, and interpreter staff needed to respond to the backlog of criminal cases that accrued during the pandemic. This allowed the court to remain open and accessible to everyone, no matter what type of case they have.

The Eighth COVID Supplemental Budget awarded \$10,896,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to King County Superior Court, and \$3,643,000 to the Department of Judicial Administration, also known as the Superior Court Clerk's Office.

"This infusion of resources will not only serve to ensure the most serious criminal cases are not delayed but will also help prevent Superior Court from having divert resources from other case types—such as family law and civil—to perform criminal trials. Although most of the people hired will be in positions that are temporary, the impact they have will be long lasting," said Chief Administrative Officer Linda K. Ridge. "They will ensure that the right to seek justice in our courts is meaningful for everyone in our community."

The funding enables Superior Court to operate additional courtrooms through 2022, with the aim of reducing the number of pending criminal cases involving violent and sexual assault charges. The charges involved in these cases include homicide, assault in the first degree, assault in the second degree, kidnapping, robbery in the first degree, burglary in the first degree (which includes a weapon or assault), rape, indecent liberties, rape of a child, child molestation, and child abuse. Because people accused of crimes have a right to face their accuser, these criminal trials must be held in-person.

The funding also prepares Superior Court to respond to eviction cases that may be filed.

Based on the number of people who are behind in rent, it is estimated that there are 160,000 possible evictions cases statewide.

The approved funding will enable Superior Court to staff one additional courtroom for the Ex Parte Department.

The funding enables Superior Court to operate additional courtrooms through 2022.

Staffing Up to Handle the Increase

Despite efforts to prevent eviction through mediation, it remains likely that Superior Court will still see an uptick in unlawful detainer (eviction) filings, which could have a significant impact on both individuals and the court.

"We are grateful that the King County Council recognized that supplementing our staffing resources and infrastructure during this unprecedented time in the court's history is key to ensuring access to justice for all," Ridge said.

Understanding this, King County Superior Court ensured the Ex Parte department would be ready for the increase by requesting the funding to staff an additional courtroom. Bringing in an additional judicial officer enabled the court's two other commissioners overseeing evictions to focus more on those cases.

In Ex Parte as throughout the court, increased staffing is essential to support the additional temporary judicial officers brought in to help address the accretion of cases building throughout the pandemic.

Superior Court also continued to extend its support for community-based services. By providing space in the King County Courthouse and Maleng Regional Justice Center for the nonprofit Housing Justice Project, King County Superior Court has for years supported efforts to address the unmet need for legal services related to eviction. That support continued throughout 2021.

More information about eviction and other Ex Parte matters can be found on page 9.

Technology

Courtroom Video System Brings the Courthouse to You

King County Superior Court Senior Systems Engineer Kevin Daggett has a bird's-eye view of the changes occurring in his workplace. On any given day, he can peer into the Courtroom Video System and see as many as 35 live Zoom sessions.

They are not your typical video calls. Each represents a hearing or trial ordinarily held in a courthouse—jury selection, hearings, and civil trials—being conducted on the record, over Zoom.

Seeing evidence of all these proceedings occurring simultaneously is still surreal, even two years into the pandemic.

"I say to myself, wow, these are all court-related calls; they are strictly related to civil or criminal courtrooms, and trial courts. Those of us in IT had long dreamed that many matters could be handled remotely," noted Daggett. "The pandemic really accelerated it."

It's often said that courts lag behind other institutions when it comes to making changes. Superior Court's response to COVID-19 provides a dramatic counter-

example. In the span of just two years, Superior Court went from being a relative novice in the world of remote courtroom technology to a super user. In 2021, seventy civil jury trials that reached a verdict or disposition in Superior Court were conducted all or in part via Zoom. All voir dire (jury selection) was conducted via Zoom. This is in addition to the 1,000 bench trials that were conducted via Zoom in 2021.

Together, these remote proceedings mean that thousands of people—jurors, litigants, witnesses, and attorneys—did not have to come into a courthouse, reducing the likelihood of being exposed to the COVID-19 virus and saving time and money. This unprecedented shift is notable not only for its public health implications but also because removing civil cases from physical courthouses freed up space for criminal trials, which must be conducted in-person.

"Our Courtroom Video System is proof positive that courts can adapt, and that access to justice for all case types can be maintained through innovation," said Presiding Judge Jim Rogers.

"Our Courtroom Video System is proof positive that access to justice for all case types can be maintained through innovation." — Presiding Judge Jim Rogers

"To see this technology become the new normal in so many of our proceedings is gratifying, because we know it is helping us reduce the backlog of criminal cases that has accrued during the pandemic," Judge Rogers said.

The King County Council approved two rounds of CARES Act funding to support these technology enhancements. The first, in May 2020, was \$1.3 million for one video conferencing system per courtroom. The second, in June 2020, was \$3 million for monitors, integrated controllers and "bring your own device" technology that allows parties to use their own computers in courtrooms.

In 2021, the funding enabled the court to continue to provide remote hearings, bench trials, Zoom jury selection, and virtual jury trials—practices initiated in 2020 as part of the court's COVID-19 response.

In September 2020, King County Superior Court was recognized nationally as a leader for having conducted remote jury trials while most of the nation's 30,000 or so trial courts remained shuttered.

"Remote court technology has done

more to help King County Superior Court deliver on our mission — Open to All, Access for All, Justice for All — than any other innovation in our history," said King County Superior Court Chief Administrative Officer Linda Ridge. "It would not have been possible without the support and resources provided to us by the King County Council."

Pioneered in ITA Court

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the only area of Superior Court where video was widely used was the Involuntary Treatment Act (ITA) Court. The ITA Court at Harborview Medical Center handles civil petitions for court-ordered mental health treatment.

The first ITA video pilot in King County occurred in early 2013. In 2014, King County created Local Mental Health Proceedings Rule (LMPR) 1.8 to allow for ITA courts to conduct all evidentiary non-jury matters via video. Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 71.05.820 was adopted in 2018 to allow ITA courts in Washington to establish courtrooms within approved hospitals and utilize video court from those hospitals.

Court Operations

Virtual Jury Selection Transforms the Juror Experience

Selecting people for a jury panel is an essential step in the process of holding a trial. Traditionally, it has been done face to face.

The emergence of the coronavirus, in March 2020, changed all that. No longer was it safe to bring hundreds of people together in jury assembly rooms. Rather than being summoned to a courthouse for jury selection, also known as voir dire, jurors received an email from a King County Superior Court bailiff with a video link.

This was a huge shift. Rather than come to a courthouse, prospective jurors could participate from wherever they happened to be.

Remote jury selection, or virtual voir dire, was put in place quickly in 2020 to facilitate the safe return to jury trials during the pandemic. Throughout 2021, Superior Court's Jury Department continued to refine the systems that support virtual voir dire

One of the major challenges posed by this change is the fact that King County Superior Court's jury management system was created for an in person process. The system allows people to request a postponement of jury service to a later date, or to be excused from it altogether. But it lacks the capacity to complete other necessary tasks, such as tracking status so that jurors can be sent out to more than one pool.

Jury Department Manager Greg Wheeler and his staff developed workarounds to complete these tasks.

"In the beginning, we were learning on the fly," Wheeler said. "Over time, we've taken input from bailiffs, court staff, judges, attorneys and jurors about what works and what doesn't and devised solutions that address their concerns."

Tracking is now being done largely via spreadsheet. Using only those jurors who have confirmed their service in the system, the jury manager forwards the confirmed jurors from a summonsing group to create a pool for a court. Care is used at each junction of this process to maintain randomization of the pool.

Upon receiving the spreadsheet, bailiffs communicate with jurors through email, and send them questionnaires. Jury selection schedules are made for groups of jurors to appear via Zoom. Bailiffs place

Jurors appreciate virtual jury selection, which allows them to participate from the comfort of their own homes.

phone calls to those jurors who have not provided an email address so that arrangements can be made for them to participate in another way. Attorneys are provided access to returned questionnaires and Zoom voir dire is done in batches. Information regarding empaneled jurors is provided to the jury department daily to ensure payment is made. Jury department staff enter data into the jury management system to accurately reflect the status of each juror.

Virtual jury selection is a more manual process than it is when done in person, requiring effort from different parts of the court.

"Our judges and bailiffs became much more involved in the pre-voir dire process, including the transmission of the juror questionnaire, compilation of results, and management of the voir dire panels," said Judge Matthew Williams, Co-Chair of Superior Court's Jury Committee.

Jurors have expressed their appreciation for remote jury selection, which allows them to participate from the comfort of their own homes, rather than sit for hours in a jury assembly room.

In a survey conducted by King County Superior Court for a forthcoming report, prospective jurors were overwhelmingly positive about the experience; 86 percent said they recommend Superior Court keep virtual voir dire. Many said they appreciated the savings in time and money of not having to travel to and from the courthouse. They said the process was efficient, and some noted that appearing via video was less stressful than coming to the courthouse.

Some jurors have said that they prefer the relative privacy of answering voir dire questions in an online questionnaire, rather than having to raise their hands in an in-person group. Many appreciate that more questions tend to be directed to them as individuals, maintaining more of a sense of privacy.

"Jurors feel safer in answering personal questions because they are in their own space. They like the fact that people can't talk on top of each other to the same degree they can during in-person voir dire," Judge Williams said. "I've had several jurors say that they feel more respected by the attorneys and by other jurors."

Virtual voir dire has the advantage of quite literally meeting people where they are. Even so, not all jurors are comfortable with it.

Jurors who are new to using the video platform tend to be less confident with it, but that is lessening as the pandemic continues, Judge Williams said. He points out that anyone who wants to do jury selection in-person still has that option.

Jurors who are unable to participate in virtual voir dire can come to the courthouse and participate from the courtroom.

Those who served on juries prior to the pandemic often express surprise at what a different experience it is. It was not so long ago that people who had received a summons from King County Superior Court would report in-person to their assigned location, either the King County Courthouse (KCCH) in downtown Seattle, or the Maleng Regional Justice Center (MRJC) in Kent. Jurors were summonsed to a particular location depending on their zip code.

Pre-pandemic, each Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday King County Superior Court assembled approximately 350 jurors to provide courts with jurors for jury selection. This took place in both the north and south courthouses.

Video jury selection allows more options for participation and respects the time of the thousands of people who show up to do their civic duty. It allows more cases to go to trial and is helping reduce an unprecedented case backlog. Judges report that video jury selection produces jury panels that are more diverse. And it is safer, because it means fewer people are exposed to risks like COVID or conditions around the downtown courthouse.

Ex Parte: Preparing to Meet Increased Need

As the trial court serving the most populous county in the state, King County Superior Court was poised to be hit with a wave of unlawful detainer (eviction) filings when Governor Inslee's moratori-

um on residential evictions expired. The potential impact of unlawful detainers coming to Superior Court was so massive it was described as a tsunami.

"We couldn't sit back and let our Court be swamped by unlawful detainers," said Commissioner Henry Judson, who works in Superior Court's Ex Parte department.

The lifting of the moratorium could have a significant effect on the court as an influx of eviction cases would lead to major strains on the court system, and further complicate the ability to respond to needs of court users.

"We had to take action to ensure access to justice is preserved, and that people with unlawful detainers and all other case types are able to have their cases timely adjudicated," Judson said.

Superior Court worked with system partners across the state to reduce the number of unlawful detainers by setting up programs that divert them to mediation. The court also sought and received funding for additional resources to ensure the Ex Parte Department was prepared to handle the projected increase in unlawful detainer filings, without diverting resources from other departments. And, the court continued to provide space for the Housing Justice Project, a King County Bar Association effort to provide free legal aid to low-income renters facing eviction.

A program of the King County Bar Association, the Housing Justice Project provides free legal assistance to renters facing eviction in King County. Superior Court has for many years provided the Housing Justice Project space inside the

King County Courthouse and the Maleng Regional Justice Center. During the pandemic, additional space was allocated to support Housing Justice's efforts to provide access to remote hearings for litigants in unlawful detainers and other ex parte matters.

Office of Interpreter Service Keeps Justice in Reach for People with Limited English Proficiency and People with Hearing Impairments

Language access is an integral part of access to justice. The Office of Interpreter Services (OIS) at King County Superior Court provides language assistance services at no cost to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals and individuals in need of American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation in all court proceedings and operations, both civil and criminal, other than when it is the responsibility of other government bodies pursuant to state law.

OIS provides interpretation services free of charge to LEP parties, witnesses, or victims; LEP parents, legal guardians, or custodians of minor children who are parties, witnesses, or victims; and LEP legal guardians or custodian of adult parties, witnesses, or victims. King County Superior Court's policy is to provide sign language interpreting services at no cost to persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf and blind as required under applicable state and federal statutes and regulations.

"OIS is committed to ensuring that appropriate, timely language services are accessible and meaningful to everyone

who needs them—regardless of whether their day in court involves going into a courthouse or showing up on Zoom," said Court Operations Director Rachael DelVillar.

A total of 16,851 interpreter events took place in 2021, 2,571 of which were trials.

Since early 2020, a number of these events have occurred remotely. Due to the Washington State Supreme Court emergency order that allowed courts to conduct remote events in response to the public health emergency, remote interpretation became essential in meeting many court interpreter needs. Guided by CR 11.3, which lays out the rules regarding remote interpretation, the court exercised heightened diligence to be sure that the interpretation provided through remote means was effective by providing meaningful access and participation for litigants.

While remote interpretation is permitted, the law states that "in-person interpreting services are the primary and preferred way of providing interpreter services for legal proceedings."

When assessing the various methods for providing interpretation, in-person interpretation is always the preferred manner, especially when the litigant is in person at court. However, between use of the telephone or video, per CR 11.3, video remote interpreting is considered more effective than telephonic interpreter services since it allows participants and interpreters the ability to see and hear all parties.

Family Court Operations

Number of People Served by the Family Law Facilitators Nearly Tripled After COVID-19 Forced Pivot to Remote Facilitation

Family Law Facilitators staff the Family Law Information Center (FLIC) and provide essential information to unrepresented family law litigants on a multitude of complicated issues, including divorce, child support, and parenting plans.

In response to COVID-19, the FLIC closed to walk-ins and Family Law Facilitators implemented remote facilitation. Following this change, the FLIC assisted more self-represented parties than ever before.

The number of parties served by the FLIC nearly tripled—from 3,331 in 2019 to 9,207 parties served in 2021.

Family Law Manager Jamie Perry believes the increase in demand was because people did not have to come to the courthouse. For many people, the difficulty of arranging travel, childcare, or time off work creates barriers to accessing services, she said.

"If they have to take a day off work to get service, then they are way less likely to get help than if they can just call in," she said.

King County Superior Court established the Facilitator program in 1993 to meet the growing number of self-represented parties in family law actions.

In early 2020, Family Court Operations developed a variety of processes to enable remote access and telephonic and video hearings, and electronic review of submissions. This included changing the setting and confirming of motions and prompted the initiation of delivery of electronic working papers. Hearings and pre-trial conferences in the family law department are presumed to be held remotely, except in rare circumstances where the court determines that in-person presence is necessary and appropriate.

The Family Court Operations department also placed a comprehensive array of instructions and forms online. Forms can be emailed, mailed, or even dropped off to Facilitators.

The number of parties served by the FLIC nearly tripled—from 3,331 in 2019 to 9,207 parties served in 2021.

To assist those with language access needs, facilitators make use of a language line operated by Superior Court's Office of Interpreter Services.

"It was a complete shift," said Family Law Facilitator Kristen Gabel. "It felt pretty chaotic in the beginning because the rules and procedures were changing, but once we got in the flow of it, it seemed to work pretty well. We were able to answer calls all morning and help people finalize their divorces, parenting plans, and modification of parenting plans in the afternoon."

For decades, getting help often meant going to the FLIC, which operated a walk-in service at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent and the King County Courthouse in Seattle.

"We would have a line out the door," Gabel said. If the facilitators didn't close at a set time, "We could have been there all night, helping people."

For litigants, the change comes with a substantial benefit: People don't have to come to court anymore to finalize their divorce or parenting plan, which means they don't have to take a day off from work or coordinate with another party.

"Generally, just coming into court makes people nervous," Gabel said, "so if they don't have to come in front of a judge or commissioner, they would prefer not to."

The FLIC hired two term limited temporary employees in 2021. One began in August, and one in December. These staff members enabled the FLIC to better manage the significant increase in calls.

As the department transitions out of COVID-19 operations, the FLIC is focusing on ways to continue to provide remote facilitation and re-introduce walk-in hours to further expand available services.

Assistance from the FLIC is available only to people who are not represented by an attorney and who are involved in divorce/legal separation, family law motions, child support modifications, establishing a parenting plan, invalidity/annulment, temporary orders, parenting plan modifications, child support adjustment, and restraining orders.

Prevention, Not Punishment: To Get Children Back in School, CAST Taps the Power of Community

The Becca Bill, signed into law in 1995, requires children between the ages of 8 and 18 to attend school regularly.

To provide court services under this law, King County Superior Court operates the At-Risk Youth (ARY), Child in Need of Services (CHINS), and Truancy programs. Known as Becca programs, these services are designed to support a child's re-engagement in school, not punish absent students and their families.

The aim is to prevent truancy petitions from being filed and reduce the number of students and families that end up having to appear in Court for truancy hearings.

While Superior Court's Becca programs have continuously adjusted their approach over the years to align with the most current research and understanding of adolescent brain development and trauma's impact on development, COVID-19 brought new challenges.

What does "regular attendance" in school mean in a pandemic—and how can Becca programs meaningfully support it?

Throughout 2020, the King County Superior Court Becca Program collaborated with the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Education Reengagement Team to consider that question.

Together, they developed one solution: the King County Community Attendance Support Team (CAST). The CAST is a county-level Community Engagement Board that meets with students and families to identify barriers to school attendance and recommend solutions. The program was developed to meet the statutory requirements of a Community Engagement Board under the Becca Law and based on best and promising practices from Community Engagement Boards around the state.

"We've been working for years to shift the approach from 'truancy' to 'education reengagement' and from 'punitive' to 'collaborative,'" said Jennie Tibbitts, who coordinates CAST and is a Becca Programs Facilitator. "The pandemic created a perfect opportunity for us to take a deep dive into this approach. The traditional truancy process was put on hold during remote learning, but we knew we had to find a way to continue to connect students, families, and school districts with education reengagement supports."

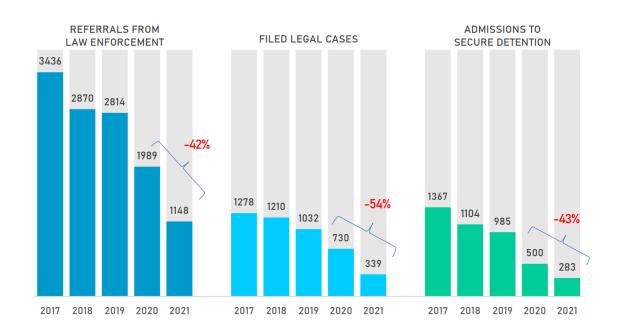
The primary goal is to connect students who have accumulated unexcused absences from school, their parents, and schools with community agencies that provide opportunities, supports, and resources to figure out what's keeping students from showing up in school, and work together to address it.

The CAST is made up of members representing a variety of community agencies and is coordinated by the King County Superior Court Becca Program Facilitators. Community Engagement Board members in Washington state are required to have received specific training on topics including trauma-informed approaches and culturally relevant responses, among others. All CAST members sign confidentiality agreements, and each team is individualized to meet the specific needs of each student and family.

The CAST is a part of the truancy process, but to promote earlier access to supports and services, parents and school districts can refer students prior to a truancy petition being filed.

"A truancy petition in King County means access to supports and resources," said Melody Edmiston, Becca Programs Facilitator. "We saw a parent referral as an opportunity to increase access to justice for parents and students looking for attendance supports."

Juvenile Court Services

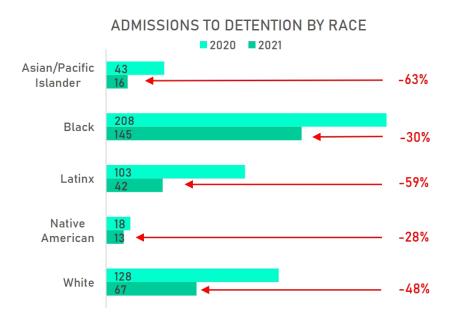


Expanding Resources to Keep Youth Connected and Safe

We are all better off when youth in our county are healthy, supported by family and community, and have no need for contact with the criminal legal system. For decades, Juvenile Court Services decades collaborated with justice system partners and diverse, non-governmental stakeholders in King County and beyond to improve outcomes for young people, their families, and communities.

Continued efforts to reduce the number of young people detained in King County are paying off. In 2021, the fewest youth ever were involved in the juvenile legal system. In the past three years the average daily juvenile detention population has been cut by more than half. This was achieved by:

- Fewer referrals from law enforcement and fewer filed legal cases
- Establishing intake criteria that limit detention eligibility; In 2020, all misdemeanors and many low-level felonies were removed from eligibility for booking into juvenile detention
- Having judges on call every night to ensure there is no delay in release of eligible youth
- Increased support for youth who are on electronic home monitoring



Juvenile Court is committed to eliminating racial and ethnic disparities and addressing gaps in services meant to support rehabilitation and accountability. Racial disparities in detention admissions dropped between 2020 and 2021.

Juvenile Court also continued its implementation of Juvenile Therapeutic Response and Accountability Court, or JTRAC, a framework for how Juvenile Court in King County operates that was launched in 2020.

Early Screening and Support

JTRAC recognizes that young people who become involved with the court system often have experienced significant trauma, and many have unmet needs.

When youth enter juvenile court, they undergo a mental health and behavioral health screening. The purpose of this screening is to identify unmet needs—whether that's mental health, behavioral health, or basic needs, such as housing and food.

"The shift with JTRAC is not waiting six months or a year into a long, complex legal case, but saying 'You have a need today, and we want to connect you to help and support today," said Juvenile Court Services Director Paul Daniels.

Dept. of Judicial Administration

CRIME CATEGORY	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2021	
Homicides	104	170	224	
Sex Crimes (exluding Failure to Register)	400	540	551	
Robbery 1	123	161	148	
Assault 1	54	91	98	
Assault 2	379	622	457	
TOTAL	1060	1584	1478	

Pending Criminal Cases for Major Crime Categories

Number of Pending Serious Violent Cases Remains High Despite Increased Trial Activity

The King County Department of Judicial Administration (DJA), more commonly known as the Superior Court Clerk's Office, serves as the record keeper and a customer service provider for the King County Superior Court.

The Clerk's Office is the authority on data about court cases, including the number of cases completed in a year, and the number of cases pending at any given time.

While other courts across the region and country closed at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, King County Superior Court never shut down. The court moved as many matters as possible to

video and telephonic proceedings.

Criminal trials must be held in-person, however, and spiking rates of COVID-19 infections in King County at times made doing so unsafe. In 2021, King County Superior Court temporarily suspended in-person jury trials six times out of concern for rising infection rates in King County due to the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

These forced pauses in criminal trial activity that gave rise to an increase in criminal case filings resulted in a backlog of pending criminal cases at the end of 2021 that in some case types was greater than the one that had accrued at the end of 2020. The number of homicide cases awaiting trial by the end of 2021 was more than double the number pending before the pandemic, at the end of 2019.

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Blake Decision Creates New Body of Work for the Clerk's Office

In February 2021, the Washington State Supreme Court decided, in State v. Blake, that the state law on drug possession was flawed and as a result convictions for drug possession charges across Washington must be vacated, and fines or fees (referred to as LFOs) paid by defendants must be refunded.

In addition, all pending drug possession charges must be dismissed, and any cases with defendants currently serving sentences for drug possession convictions must be re-sentenced.

The *Blake* decision, as it is known, came as a surprise to many. And it created a huge and consequential body of work for the Clerk's Office, virtually overnight.

The Clerk's Office manages receipt, disbursement and accounting of all fees, fines and payments made in Superior Court cases. It is the King County department perhaps most affected by the *Blake* decision, as is the case for county clerks across the state.

DJA hired eight additional staff to do the *Blake* work, which resulted in creation of a new section in the Finance Division of DJA. Superior Court added a pro tem judi-

cial officer and coordinator. The prosecutor and public defense have also staffed up to take on this additional work.

By the end of 2021, a cooperative effort among the prosecutor, defense, Superior Court and the Clerk's Office resulted in the court entering over 2,300 orders on *Blake* cases, while the Clerk's Office issued over \$37,000 in refunds. The total includes nearly 700 case dismissals and more than 1,300 vacated convictions.

The plan is to get to the point where the court enters a few hundred *Blake* orders per week. Even with that, since the number of cases to address is so big and the research to find all the "LFOs paid" data is so time consuming, it's clear that Superior Court and DJA will be working on *Blake* cases for many years to come.

Budget, Caseload & Performance

Superior Court Budget

2021 EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM AREA				
Civil and Criminal Operations	Includes judges*, commissioners, bailiffs, court reporters, interpreters, arbitration, jury, Ex Parte and Adult Drug Court.	\$22,080,029		
Juvenile Court	Includes judges*, operations, diversion, probation, interpreters, assessments, and FIRS.	\$11,255,809		
Administration	Includes executive staff, human resources, technology services, finance, facilities, and clerical services.	\$17,128,958		
Family Court Operations	Includes commissioners, court coordinators, Unified Family Court, Family Court Services, Family Law Facilitators, Family Treatment Court, Juvenile Dependency, Dependency CASA, Truancy and At-Risk Youth, and Early Resolution Case Management programs.	\$11,813,703		
TOTAL		\$62,278,499		

Dept. of Judicial Administration Budget

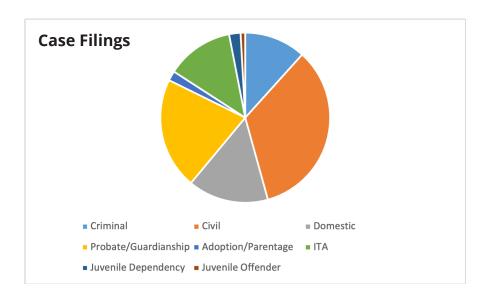
2021 EXPENDITURES BY	PROGRAM AREA	
Caseflow	Includes court clerk services, case processing, electronic document processing, and sealed document coordination.	\$4,811,614
Court Services	Courtroom clerks, records access, FTR program management	\$1,743,588
MRJC/Customer Services	Includes court clerk services, customer service, e-working copies, domestic violence and protection orders.	\$4,922,975
Financial Services	Includes court clerk services, cashiers, judgments, case auditing, disbursements, accounting, LFO collections, and witness payments.	\$3,924,298
Juvenile	Includes court clerk services, case processing, electronic document processing, customer service, records access, dependency publication costs at Juvenile.	\$1,038,369
Drug Court	Includes case management, treatment expense, transitional housing expenses, support services, and program management for the adult drug court program.	\$2,701,540
Administration	Includes administration staff, human resources, technology services, payroll, procurement, accounts payable, clerical services, statistical analysis, office equipment costs, intragovernmental services.	\$7,361,099
TOTAL		\$26,503,483

Caseload and Performance

Case Filings

In 2021, a total of 40,249 cases were filed in King County Superior Court, down 6.6% from 2020. Criminal, civil, and juvenile offender cases fell, while the number of probate, guardianship, and parentage cases rose.

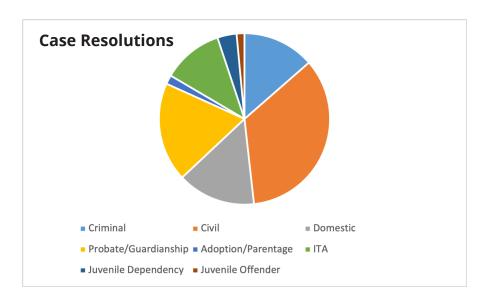
CASE TYPE	2020	2021	Change from 2020
Criminal	5,940	4,707	-21%
Civil	15,405	13,682	-11%
Domestic	6,163	6,184	0%
Probate & Guardianship	7,491	8,535	14%
Adoption & Parentage	771	748	-3%
ITA	5131	5,159	1%
Juvenile Dependency	1414	878	-38%
Juvenile Offender	788	356	-55%
TOTAL JUDICIAL FILINGS	43,103	40,249	-7%



Case Resolutions

The court resolved more cases than the filings received in 2021. In particular, the court had more criminal resolutions than criminal filings in 2021 due to a sizeable dismissal of *Blake* cases. However, the number of resolutions overall was significantly lower than the pre-COVID level.

CASE TYPE	2021	Change from 2020
Criminal	5,715	35%
Civil	14,577	-2%
Domestic	6,224	4%
Probate & Guardianship	7,881	11%
Adoption & Parentage	713	4%
ITA	4,817	-3%
Juvenile Dependency	1,531	-42%
Juvenile Offender	624	-25%
TOTAL JUDICIAL RESOLUTIONS	42,082	2%



Caseload and Performance

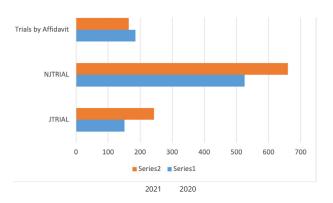
Clearance Rate

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Criminal	-4%	-3%	-12%	-29%	21%
Civil	0%	-4%	1%	-4%	7%
Domestic	0%	1%	0%	-3%	1%
Probate/Guardianship	-4%	-4%	-1%	-5%	-8%
Adoption/Parentage	-2%	0%	-3%	-11%	-5%
ITA	-1%	-5%	0%	-3%	-7%
Juvenile Dependency	-4%	-24%	-9%	86%	74%
Juvenile Offender	-11%	1%	-8%	5%	75%

Clearance rate describes the relationship between case filings and case resolutions. A positive rate means more cases were resolved in a particular category than were filed. Ideally, the number of cases resolved would equal the number of cases filed; however, fluctuations in filing rates cause annual variations.

Trial Activity

TRIAL CATEGORY	2021	Change from 2020
Jury Trials	243	61%
Non-Jury Trials	660	26%
Trials by Affidavit	164	11%

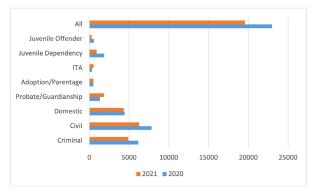


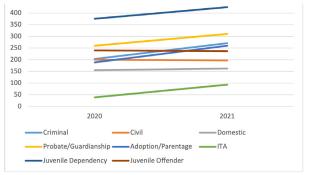
King County Superior Court conducted a total of 903 trials (243 jury trials and 660 non-jury trials) in 2021. This is a remarkable achievement during the pandemic time.

Pending Caseload

A case is considered pending if it is unresolved and active. The overall pending caseload at the end of 2021 was 19,567 cases, showing a noticeable decrease from the end of 2020 (-15%) due to continued court activity during the pandemic and low filings in most case types. All major case types had shown a decrease in pending caseload when compared to 2020: criminal down 20%, civil down 20%, domestic down 3%, and juvenile offender down 50%. Criminal pending caseload decreased from the historical high in 2020 due to COVID-19, however, the current pending criminal volume is still significantly higher than the pre-COVID level. It is worth noting that the court has many more unresolved serious criminal cases in homicides, sex crimes, burglary 1st degree, and assaults (1st and 2nd degree) than it did pre-COVID.

CASE TYPE	2021	Change from 2020
Criminal	4,889	-20%
Civil	6,267	-20%
Domestic	4,317	-3%
Probate & Guard- ianship	1,844	40%
Adoption & Parentage	515	2%
ITA	535	67%
Juvenile Dependency	916	-50%
Juvenile Offender	284	-50%
YEAR-END TOTAL PENDING CASELOAD	19,567	-15%





Judges and Commissioners

Judges of the King County Superior Court in 2021

LeRoy McCullough Appointed, 1989

Dean S. Lum Appointed, 1998

Douglass A. North *Elected, 2000*

Catherine D. Shaffer *Elected*. 2000

Mary E. Roberts Appointed, 2003

Andrea A. Darvas *Elected, 2005*

Jim Rogers Elected, 2005

Regina S. Cahan *Elected/Appointed, 2009*

Patrick H. Oishi Appointed, 2011

Judith H. Ramseyer *Elected/Appointed, 2012*

Susan H. Amini Appointed, 2013

Elizabeth J. Berns Elected, 2013

Julia L. Garratt Appointed, 2013

Suzanne R. Parisien *Elected, 2013*

Sean P. O'Donnell Elected, 2013

Ken Schubert *Elected, 2013*

A. Chad Allred Appointed, 2014

Samuel S. Chung Appointed, 2014

John Ruhl Appointed, 2014

Tanya Thorp Appointed, 2014

Johanna Bender Appointed, 2015

Veronica Alicea-Galván Appointed, 2015

Janet M. Helson Appointed, 2015

David S. Keenan Elected, 2017

John F. McHale Elected, 2017

Catherine L. Moore *Elected, 2017*

Nicole A. Phelps Elected, 2017

Kristin V. Richardson *Elected, 2017*

Steve G. Rosen *Elected, 2017*

Matthew W. Williams *Elected, 2017*

J. Michael Diaz Appointed, 2018 Karen Donohue *Appointed, 2018*

Marshall Ferguson Appointed, 2018

Maureen McKee Appointed, 2018

Mafé Rajul Appointed, 2018

Averil Rothrock Appointed, 2018

Michael R. Scott Appointed, 2018

Sandra Widlan Appointed, 2018

Brian McDonald Appointed, 2019

Annette Messitt Appointed, 2019

Michael K. Ryan Appointed, 2019

Ketu Shah Appointed, 2019

Aimee M. Sutton Appointed, 2019

David Whedbee *Appointed, 2019*

Josephine Wiggs-Martin Appointed, 2019

Melinda J. Young Appointed, 2019

Nelson K.H. Lee Appointed, 2020

Cindi Port Appointed, 2020 Andrea Robertson Appointed, 2020

Hillary Madsen *Elected, 2021*

Jason Poydras *Appointed 2021*

Matthew J. Segal Appointed, 2021

Adrienne McCoy Appointed, 2021

Judges Who Retired in 2021

Julie A. Spector Appointed, 1999

Susan J. Craighead Appointed, 2007

Commissioners in 2021

Hollis Holman
Leonid Ponomarchuk
Mark Hillman
Jennie Laird
Melinda Johnson Taylor
Henry Judson
Camille Schaefer
Nicole Wagner
Jonathon Lack
Bradford Moore

Superior Court Mourns the Loss of Judge David Steiner

King County Superior Court Judge David A. Steiner passed away unexpectedly in November 2021.

"I had the pleasure of getting to know Judge Steiner when we both served as officers with the District and Municipal Court Judges Association," said Judge Veronica Galván. "He was dedicated to his family, loved being a judge, and was an avid biker and runner. It is always tragic when we lose one of our own, and a stark reminder that life is fleeting and unpredictable. Our hearts go out to his



friends and family as they seek comfort throughout this difficult time."

Governor Inslee appointed Judge Steiner to the King County Superior Court in 2019, commending his "vast judicial experience." Later that year, he was elected to continue serving in his position.

Judge Steiner was born in Seattle and obtained his undergraduate degree from the University of Washington and Juris Doctorate from Seattle University School of Law. He began his legal career in 1984 at Ogden Murphy Wallace, where he represented municipalities in civil and criminal cases.

In 1996, he was appointed and subsequently elected as a judge on the King County District Court, where he served for twenty-three years. During his tenure on the District Court, he served as Presiding Judge for three years, President of both the Washington State District and Municipal Court Judges Association.

Judge Steiner was a strong believer in the importance of education and mentorship. He instructed new judges at the Washington State Judicial College and assisted training judges at national domestic violence judicial conferences.

His passing is a loss deeply felt by all of us at Superior Court.

Superior Court Employees

COURT ADMINISTRATION

Chief Administrative Officer, Linda Ridge

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Jorene Reiber

Communications Manager, Amy Roe

Project/Program Manager, Beth Taylor

Facilities and Security Manager, Paul Manolopoulos

Facilities Specialist, Kirby Pierce

Facilities Technician, Rodrigo Jacinto

Executive Specialist, Angelina Jimeno

Administrative Support, Karissa Zeno Lulu Miles

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Director, Steve Davis

Business & Finance Officer, Rob Bradstreet

Project/Program Manager, Pat Ford-Campbell

Purchasing Fiscal Specialist, Gary Cutler

Business & Finance Specialist, Irving Sanchez Gaona

Finance Technician, Regina Jacobs

Payroll & Accounts Payable Tech., Jose Ramos

Mail Service Assistant, Kristan Johnson

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

Director, Barbara Miner

HUMAN RESOURCES

Director, Judy Hullett

Senior Human Resources Consultant, Kathryn Schipper

Human Resources Analyst, Gertrude Fuentes

Human Resources Technician, Cynthia Williams

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Director, Andy Hill

IT Applications Supervisor, Hugh Kim

Senior Database Administrator, Rita Napitupulu

Web/Application Developer, Doug Buckmeier

Senior Application Developers,

Rebecca Sanders

Diana Panagiotopoulos

Business Analyst, Sathia Vann

Senior Systems Engineers,

Chair-Li Chang

Kevin Daggett

Senior Systems Specialist, Ted Shaw

IT Systems Specialists,

lerry Ito

Michael Kim

Senior Desktop Support Technicians,

Michelle Croy

Kawai Tang

JUVENILE COURT SERVICES

Director, Paul Daniels

Managers, Robert Gant Aaron Parker

Assistant to the Director, Kimberley Rosenstock

Project/Program Manager, Jovi Catena

JUVENILE COURT OPERATIONS

Supervisor, Jacqui Arrington

Loretta George Natasha Jackson

JUVENILE ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

Supervisor, Joanne Moore-Miller

Administrative Specialists, Betty Jimerson Chris Hong Julie Allen

JUVENILE JUSTICE ASSESMENT TEAM

Supervisor, Anna Doolittle

Program Coordinator, Tammy Wehmeyer

Clinical Psychologist, Chalon Irvin

Chemical Dependency Professional, Ashley Updike

Mental Health Technician, Milana Davydova Christian Quintanar-Aragon

SUD Specialist, Elizabeth Franzo

RESTORATIVE PROGRAMS

Supervisor, Jeremy Crowe

FIRS Juvenile Probation Counselors, Cecilia Camino Dede Gartrell Jason Canfield

Step-Up Social Worker Lead, Lily Anderson

Social Workers, Fahmia Ali Francesca Peila-Phariss

Superior Court Employees

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Supervisor, Diane Korf

Education/Employment Specialists, Dawn Nannini Guy McWhorter John Leers Justin Cox

Administrative Specialist, Dorcas Olegario

Diversion PYJ Program Specialist,, David Elliott

Resource Center Admin Specialist, Paula Moses

CSEC Program Manager, Kelly Mangiaracina

SCREENING UNIT

Supervisor, Dan Baxter

Juvenile Probation Counselors, Lisaa Lewis-Lucas Ronald Tarnow Lee Lim Lisa Higgins Christy Cochran

On Call JPCs,
Deshanna Brown
Claudia Scipio
Eddie Pompey
Harriet Slye
Katie Forbes
Michael West
Sharon Miller

WACIC Data Coordinator, Dominick Beck

INTAKE SERVICES

Supervisor, Todd Foster

JPC Lead, Karla Powelson

Juvenile Probation Counselors, Leonor Soliz Gabrielle Pagano Michael Bowles Yoko Maeshiro

INTAKE SERVICES II

Supervisor, Josalyn Conley

IPC Lead, Lisa Gistarb

Juvenile Probation Counselors, Yvette Gaston Kendra Morgan Kiersten Knutson Williette Venkataya Kris Bennett

CITY UNIT

Supervisor, Tracy Dixon

JPC Lead, Diane Rayburn

JPCs
Bill Bodick
Daryl Cerdinio
Demetrius Devers
Bruce Gourley
Diana Quall

NORTHEAST UNIT— BELLEVUE

Supervisor, Melissa Sprague

JPC Lead, Gwen Spears

Juvenile Probation Counselors, Norm Charouhas Dawn Closs Dan Higgins Randy Kok

Administrative Specialist, Wendy Johnson

SOUTH I UNIT— RENTON

Supervisor, JoeAnne Taylor

IPC Lead, Nikki Burr

Juvenile Probation Counselors,
Darlin Johnson
Fred Aulava
Mai Tran
Michelle Mihail
Yvonne Clement-Smith

Administrative Specialist, Lameania Bridges

SOUTH II UNIT—FEDERAL WAY

Supervisor, Kelli Lauritzen

JPC Lead, Kris McKinney

Juvenile Probation Counselors, Brandon Lyons Michelle Higa Rachael Hubert Francisca Madera Kelli Sullivan

Administrative Specialist, Danielle Kidd

FAMILY COURT OPERATIONS

Director, Jorene Reiber

Family Court Operations Lead, Wolfey Gerhardt

FAMILY LAW/UFC OPERATIONS

Manager, Jamie Perry

Supervisors, Victoria Jacobson Korey Knuth

Early Resolution Case Managers, Najja Bullock Tamara Howie Christina Luera Heather Muwero Gretchen Neale

FAMILY LAW/UFC OPERATIONS (CONTINUED)

Family Law Facilitators, Jeanna Bento Kristen Gabel Jennifer Hillyard Darla Jara Allison Lee

Parent Seminar Coordinator, Mary Ann Pennington

Civil Case Specialist, Caroline Leung

Family Law Coordinators, Joanna Antrim Carly Bouton Jessica Cowin Alea Espina-Dumas Mandy Holdener Emma Keys Lara Pait

FAMILY COURT SERVICES

Manager, Connor Lenz

Assistant Program Manager, Julie McDonald

Supervisor, Tracey White

Social Workers,
Tracie Barnett
Angela Battisti
Alisa Benitez
Jennifer Bercot
Holly Bernard
Nicole Bynum
Desiree Canter
Meagan Cordova
Kristi McQueen
Sarah Zubair

Dependency Mediators, Joshua Henderson Kendy Rossi

Becca Program Specialists, Melody Edmiston Jennifer Tibbitts

Superior Court Employees

FAMILY COURT SERVICES (CONTINUED)

Becca Case Managers, Amy Andree Karen Chapman

Adoption Paralegal, Gina Reyes

FCS Case Coordinators, Brooklyn Adams Taryn LaRoche

Customer Service Specialists, Darien Riffe Vanessa Snelson

DEPENDENCY CASA

Manager, Michael Griesedieck

Assistant Program Manager, Wai-Ping Li Landis

Supervisor, Kathy McCormack

Program Attorneys, Elizabeth Berris Jennie Cowan Demetri Heliotis Lori Irwin Kathleen Martin April Rivera

Staff GAL Specialists, Pauline Duke Virginia Whalen

CASA Specialists, Rashida Ballard Carolyn Frimpter Janet Horton Megan Notter Fred Pfistner Rie Takeuchi Reyana Ugas Deanna Watson

Paralegals, Laura Chunyk Vickey Wilson

Customer Service Specialists, Diane Fields Stephanie Richardson Toni Rodriguez

DEPENDENCY OPERATIONS

FICIP Specialist, Stacy Keen

Dependency Coordinators, Malinda You Brandon Soltero

FAMILY TREATMENT COURT

Supervisor, Jill Murphy

Parents for Parents Coordinator, Shawn Powell

Family Treatment Specialists, Cathy Lehmann Linda Townsend-Whitham April Coniff

Court Program Specialists, Kandice Trenary Dajani Winzer

FRS Specialists, Teresa Anderson-Harper Mansiha Jackson

Administrative Support, Kari Forbes Ashley Mares

BAILIFFS

Mary Ballanger Chad Berlin Ann Brockenbrough **Chase Craig** Stevie Craig Lati Culverson Allessandra de Faria Katheryne Davis Maria Diga Nhu Dinh Laura Dorris Jennifer Eatchel Kathryn Evans Michael Getman-Gerbec **Iill Gerontis** Monica Gillum Kellie Griffin Phillip Hennings Rebecca Hibbs Salina Hill

Matthew Hodgman **Greg Howard** Sarah Hudson Gabby Jacobsen Renee Janes Jillian Johnson Jodi Johnson Manny La Guardia Eric Lombardo Beatrice Marquez Shaylynn Nelson Kelli Northrop Erin O'Connor Marci Parducci Tikecha Pearson **James Peterson Shannon Raymond** Ricki Reese Ayako Sato **Brenda Smith**

BAILIFFS (CONTINUED)

Joy Stransky
Janie Smoter
Linda Tran
Lisa Tran
Alec Unis
Wendy Vickery
Jacqueline Ware
Helen Woodke
Peggy Wu
Lisa Zimnisky

COURT OPERATIONS

Director, Rachael DelVillar

Court Operations Managers, John Salamony Sandra Ogilvie

Court Operations Supervisor, Nikki Riley

Judicial Technicians, Regine Tugublimas Yen Phung

Customer Service Specialist, Valerie Badillo-Eccles

ARBITRATION & EX PARTE DEPARTMENT

Supervisor, Nadia Simpson

Judicial Technicians, Catherine Kuvac Patricia Pizzuto

Guardian Ad Litem, Keith Thomson

JURY DEPARTMENT

Manager, Greg Wheeler Supervisor, Christina Ly

Jury Services Technicians, Sasha Mohnani (split OIS) Katherine Glenn Irene Szczerba

COURT REPORTERS

Marci Chatelain Bridget O'Donnell Kimberly Girgus Michael Townsend Jr. Kevin Moll Miranda Seitz

CIVIL DEPARTMENT

Supervisor, Heiti Milnor-Lewis

Civil Case Scheduling Technicians, Alice Gilliam

Judicial Technicians, Joseph Mansor Wendy Elizalde-Romero

CRIMINAL DEPARTMENT

Supervisors, Erica Conway Jonathan Bussey

Technical Processing Specialist, Carla Gaber

Court Program Technician, Tress Heckler

Customer Service Specialist, Geena Hunji

Criminal Calendar Technician, Jackie Snodgrass

INTERPRETER SERVICES

Manager, Chris Kunej

Supervisor, Irene Anulacion

Interpreter Services Technicians, Dara Chiem Hakim Lakhal Charlotte Taylor

ITA COURT

Manager, Margo Burnison

Coordinator, April Ramirez-Chavez

The mission of King County Superior Court is to serve the public by ensuring justice through accessible and effective forums for the fair, just, understandable, and timely resolution of legal matters.

Core Values

- » Fair, Understandable, and Timely
- » Leadership
- » Respect
- » Accessible
- » Safe
- » Service to the Public
- » Innovation

Strategic Focus Areas 2019-2023

Access, Services, and Programs that Ensure Justice

Case Management and Timely Resolution

Funding for Core Responsibilities and Court Innovations

Facilities, Security, and Technology Expansion/Improvement

Judicial Officer/Staff Development and Workforce Engagement

King County Courthouse | 516 Third Avenue | Seattle WA 98104 Clark Children and Family Justice Center | 1211 East Alder | Seattle WA 98122 Maleng Regional Justice Center | 401 Fourth Avenue North | Kent WA 98032 Ninth & Jefferson Building | ITA Court | 908 Jefferson Street | Seattle WA 98104

