



Report of the Courts of Washington



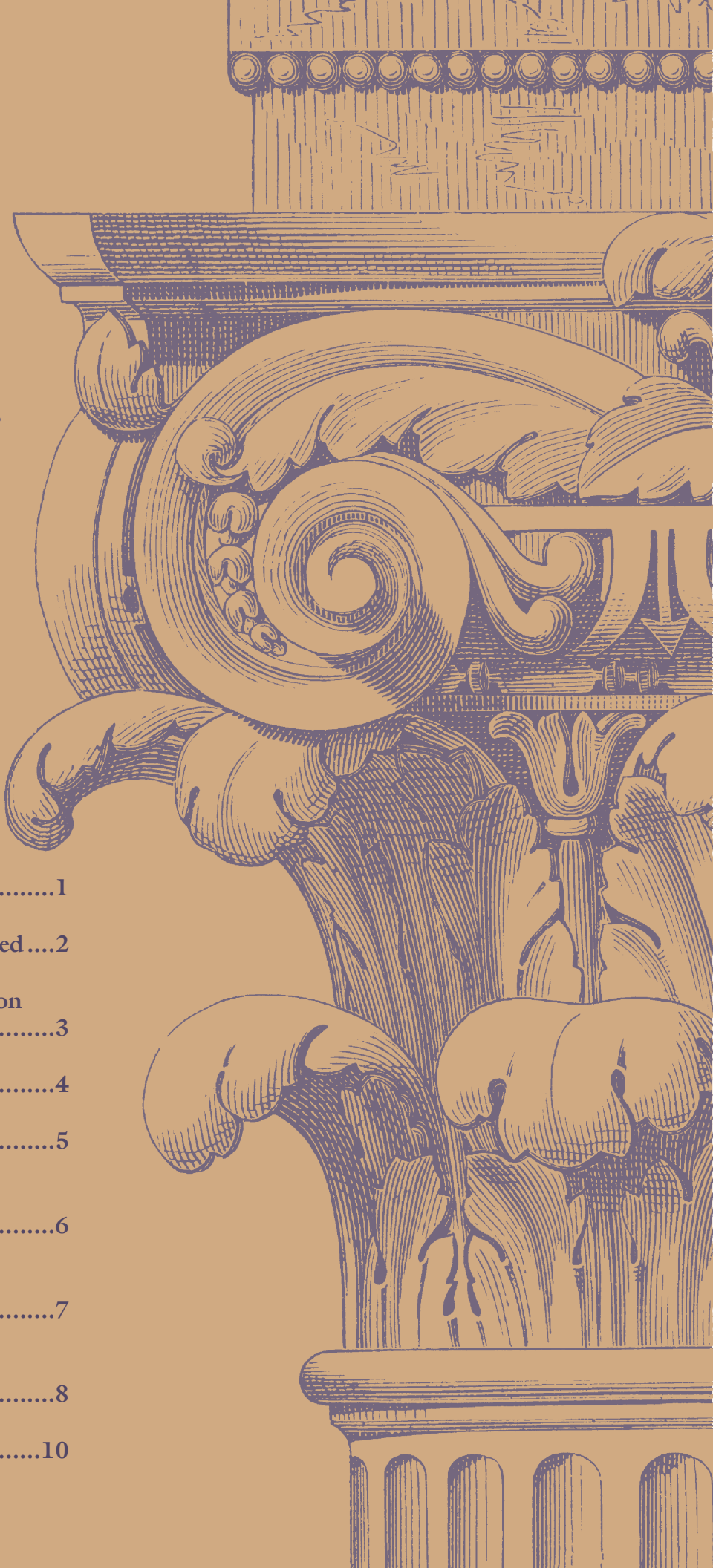
2000



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Working to Improve Operations and Access to Justice

W

ith increased leadership from the Washington State Board for Judicial Administration (BJA), Washington's courts are taking several steps to speak with one voice for the judiciary.

“The Governance Subcommittee suggested redefining BJA membership so that it was not viewed as a ‘top-down’ dominated organization.”

Co-chaired by Washington Supreme Court Chief Justice Gerry Alexander and Kitsap County District Court Judge James Riehl, the BJA is charged with adopting policies and providing leadership for the administration of justice in Washington courts.

While in existence since 1987, the BJA composition and structure changed dramatically in 2000 to increase representation for each level of court, based on recommendations of the Commission on Justice, Efficiency and Accountability. The Governance Subcommittee suggested redefining BJA membership so that it was not viewed as a “top-down” dominated organization.

Washington's presiding judges agreed, meeting for the first time in August of 1999, when they voted that such a change would be the top-ranked solution to solving four major problems facing their courts: Inadequate resources; loss of independence; under-enforced judgments and warrants; and impediments to caseload.

Under court rules adopted by the Washington Supreme Court, the BJA increased representation of all levels of court, including the new position of “member-chair.” Meeting on a monthly basis to take positions on legislative and administrative matters, membership of the BJA now includes five members from the appellate courts, five members from the superior courts, and five members from the courts of limited jurisdiction. Also included are two non-voting members from the Washington State Bar Association, and the State Court Administrator.



“Project 2001” Subcommittee Formed

As one of its first official actions, the BJA unanimously decided to create a subcommittee to study how Washington Courts could improve efficiencies and operations.

Referencing a 1999 public opinion poll commissioned by the Office of the Administrator for the Courts, former Chief Justice Richard P. Guy noted, “In a statewide survey last year, we learned that the public feels the courts are too

confusing, cost too much and take too long to reach a decision. Through this subcommittee, the courts will work with the Legislature to implement real reforms to improve operations.”

Citizen members, business leaders, county clerks, court administrators and members of the Washington State Legislature were invited to join the subcommittee to explore the resource and operational problems facing the judiciary and issues such as court jurisdiction.

In all, more than 145 members served on the committee and its five workgroups. Project 2001 provided a semi-formal setting, with facilitators to help monitor and guide the discussions of court reform. The Committee looked at a comprehensive reorganization of the court system, concluding that major improvements could be made with three proposals: increasing the authority of presiding judges; allowing for the ‘portability’ of judges among the trial court levels; and fostering collaborations among trial courts.

After 10 months of study, the Committee presented its report to the BJA on October 20, 2000. Comment was solicited from county and minority bar associations, prosecutors, public defenders associations, legal interest groups and the general public prior to submission to the Washington State Legislature for consideration.

After its consideration, the Legislature passed Senate Joint Resolution 8208, which if approved by voters in November of 2001, will allow all elected judges to sit in a superior court at the request of a presiding judge without the consent of parties.

The amendment proposal is seen as a tool to not only help balance the workload and resolve cases more quickly, but it will allow local courts the flexibility to meet trial need, based on local conditions, resources and talents.

“Project 2001 provided a semi-formal setting, with facilitators to help monitor and guide the discussions of court reform.”

Increasing Cooperation, Collaboration Amongst Trial Court Levels

Another result of the court reform effort is the creation of Trial Court Coordinating Councils, (TCCCs) now being formed by counties throughout the state to work toward maximum utilization of judicial and court resources among all trial court levels.

By fostering a better understanding of each other's courts, trial court levels are gathering to brainstorm on how to improve services to the public.

Inter-jurisdictional teams from Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish and Spokane Counties have begun projects in the following areas:

- An inter-jurisdictional domestic violence protection order project, which would allow court users who live anywhere in the county to visit any courthouse to receive a protection order.
- Creation of a "community court concierge" position to be cross-trained to provide information across court jurisdictions. In addition to directing customers to the proper courtroom or office, the position could serve as a facilitator for self-appointed litigants who need help in the areas of domestic relations, small claims, domestic violence, CHINS, adoption, probate, or guardianship issues.
- Creation of united substance abuse and mental illness courts at the district and superior court levels. Also termed a "dual-disorder" court, it

would allow for better control and service to the 30% of substance abusers who are also identified as having mental health issues and the 70% of mental health court users identified as having substance abuse problems.

- Improved access to all trial courts, including the creation of a central phone number for all court levels in the county; information boards; brochures and maps.

Information on progress from TCCCs throughout the state can be found on the Washington Courts website at www.courts.wa.gov



“By fostering a better understanding of each other’s courts, trial court levels are gathering to brainstorm on how to improve services to increase the public’s level of trust in the courts.”

Utilizing New Technology

With a goal of providing better access to the courts, the Washington State Judicial Information System Committee (JISC) is migrating towards a web-based approach for the state's two-decade-old computer system.

Specifically, JISC will work to increase access to justice through electronic filing at the appellate level. In addition, the Committee started a pro se project, developing forms similar to "turbo-tax" for dissolution and domestic violence cases, both of which have a high percentage of self-appointed litigants. Citizens will be able to go on the Internet, identify the form they need, and complete it through automated prompts from beginning to end. By design, the project will also save court personnel time currently used to answer questions from the public, and fulfill the heart of the JIS mission, "expedition and timeliness."

A new emphasis has also been added to coordinate with other local and state agencies requiring JIS applications. The coordination runs parallel to a state digital government goal, where criminal justice information will be input to a database only once, and then shared with all the necessary government agencies. Including a data standards committee for interagency data exchanges, the Justice Information Network (part of the Department of Information Services) combines the state's major criminal justice agencies to reach that goal. The OAC is a partner, along with the Washington State Patrol, the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, and many others.

OAC has two strategies for converting JIS applications to web-based systems:

- First, most new applications will be web-based from the start. According to the strategic plan, "The use of a new object-oriented design for these applications will enable OAC to build more flexible systems and speed up the delivery of new systems."
- Second, since current applications – termed 'legacy' systems – are too expensive to entirely replace, case management systems for the trial court levels will be sequentially redeveloped over a period of years.

The strategy for the future includes partnership with the courts, the legal community and many others, implemented incrementally. Efficiencies for the future will also carry a significant cost. Funding for full-time personnel and new equipment is crucial before the vision can become a reality.

In the end, the new approach is critical to the future of the JIS. In time, the improvements will work to reduce training, maintenance and integrated criminal justice costs, as well as being a mechanism to provide a more timely response to court customers.



Working to Improve Jury Service



Every year, nearly 150,000 citizens respond to the call to serve as jurors. Recognizing the fundamental role jurors provide to our system of justice and the modern-day burdens of responding to a jury summons, our state's courts are making a significant effort to make jury service a more satisfactory experience.

Through the work of the Washington State Jury Commission, chaired by Thurston County Superior Court Judge Daniel Berschauer, more than forty recommendations for change were suggested in 2000, many of which are now being implemented by Washington's judges.

The judiciary is making other changes aimed at reducing the burden of jury service to the average citizen. From allowing jurors to be more involved in a trial, to reducing the "legalese" that often confronts jurors in the courtroom, steps are being taken to make jury service less confusing and more rewarding.

Highlights of the Commission's recommendations to the judiciary and the Washington State Legislature:

- Provide jurors with full and complete information about jury service from the time they are first summoned, utilizing a website designed to educate jurors about jury duty.
- Utilize jurors more efficiently, and avoid calling more citizens to court than are needed.
- Limit jury service to two days or one trial.
- Provide adequate facilities for jurors with special consideration to those with disabilities or special needs.
- Permit jurors to take notes, ask questions to clarify instructions, and submit written clarifying questions to witnesses, subject to careful judicial supervision.
- Provide jurors with notebooks in lengthy or complex cases containing such items as copies of jury instructions and exhibits.
- Increase the jury fee to \$45 from the second day forward, with the state funding the additional \$35 and localities continuing to pay \$10 for the first and subsequent days.

To learn more about the court system and jury service, visit our new website for jurors at: www.courts.wa.gov/jury/. Access further information about the jury commission's report online at www.courts.wa.gov/jurycomm.



Impacts of Race and Ethnicity on Drug Charges

In April, Washington State's Minority and Justice Commission unveiled a study on the impact of race and ethnicity on charging and sentencing drug offenders in King, Pierce and Yakima Counties. The study was conducted by researchers Rodney L. Engen, Ph.D., Randy R. Gainey, Ph.D., and Sara Steen, Ph.D.

With the full cooperation of prosecuting attorneys and judges in the three counties, the researchers collected data from files and interviews, making these findings:

Charges are routinely changed between initial filing and conviction, suggesting that the decision-making that occurs prior to sentencing often has a greater impact on the punishment that offenders receive than does the exercise of discretion in sentencing. If there are differences in the way

these decisions are made for different racial and ethnic groups, such differences could contribute to sentencing disparities that would be masked by "legal" factors (i. e., attributed to differences in offending behavior) at the sentencing stage...

[The researchers] concluded...that the data provide no evidence that race and ethnicity are important factors affecting charging decisions for drug offenders.

The Washington State Minority and Justice Commission was created by the Supreme Court in 1990 to address racial and ethnic bias in the courts. Co-chaired by Justices Charles Z. Smith and Charles W. Johnson of the Washington Supreme Court, its Research subcommittee, chaired by Court of Appeals Judge Kenneth H. Kato, commissioned this study. For more information visit the Commission's website at: <http://www.courts.wa.gov/mjc>

"[The researchers] concluded... that the data provide no evidence that race and ethnicity are important factors affecting charging decisions for drug offenders."

Judges Educating Youth on the Court System

From participating in programs such as Judges in the Classroom and We the People, to stepping off the bench to speak at luncheon Rotary Club meetings and civic organizations, judges are reaching out to their communities in record numbers.

As a priority of the Board for Judicial Administration to increase the public's trust and confidence in the courts, several outreach programs are in place to facilitate judicial education with students throughout our state.

- **Judges in the Classroom:** Judges from Washington State Courts present law-related education to grades K-12. The program includes more than 30 lesson plans for judges and teachers to lead group discussions and encourage participation. Question and answer sessions are also included on how Washington Courts operate. Teachers and judges interested in the program can contact the Office of the Administrator for the Courts directly at 360-705-5276, or log on to the website at www.courts.wa.gov/courts/education
- **YMCA Mock Trial Competition:** Coordinated by YMCA Youth and Government, and Chaired by King County Superior Court Judge William Downing, the Mock Trial Competition gathers high school teams which argue a fictional case before judges and attorneys. District competitions are held locally in each county, leading up to a statewide competition, in which twenty high school teams from across the state compete for a statewide title in a two-day, four-round competition. In 2000, Washington Supreme Court Justice Gerry Alexander presided over the championship trial, with more than 30 judges statewide volunteering their time in the two-day event. For further information about the program, contact the YMCA at 360-534-0155.
- **Law Week:** Each year, lawyers and judges visit classrooms in almost every county during Law Week, the first week of May. Designed to increase citizen understanding of the important role that the

law plays in their lives, nearly 20,000 students participated in the statewide program to educate them about specific areas of the law, conduct mock trials, and discuss current legal issues. For further information, contact the Washington State Bar Association at 206-443-WSBA.

- **We the People... The Citizen and the Constitution:** We the People was developed more than a decade ago in the bicentennial year of the Constitution, with United States Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger leading scholars and educators from around the country. Today, the program is offered through the national Center for Civic Education to help students develop an understanding of their rights and responsibilities under the Constitution. The program is generally presented to the fifth, eighth and eleventh grade levels. Free textbooks, teacher manuals and training have been offered to more than 1,400 teachers in our state who participate in the program. Judges participate by visiting classrooms, hosting students to visit their courtrooms, or by being a resource for teachers and students. Information about the program, including a listing of judicial volunteers, is offered online via the Washington Courts' website. For teachers with questions regarding the program, please contact the state coordinator, Kathy Hand at 206-244-3463 or via e-mail at kathyhand@home.com



Learning More About Washington Courts

Washington's Court Homepage now has increased navigation ease and provides options previously unavailable on the www.courts.wa.gov site.

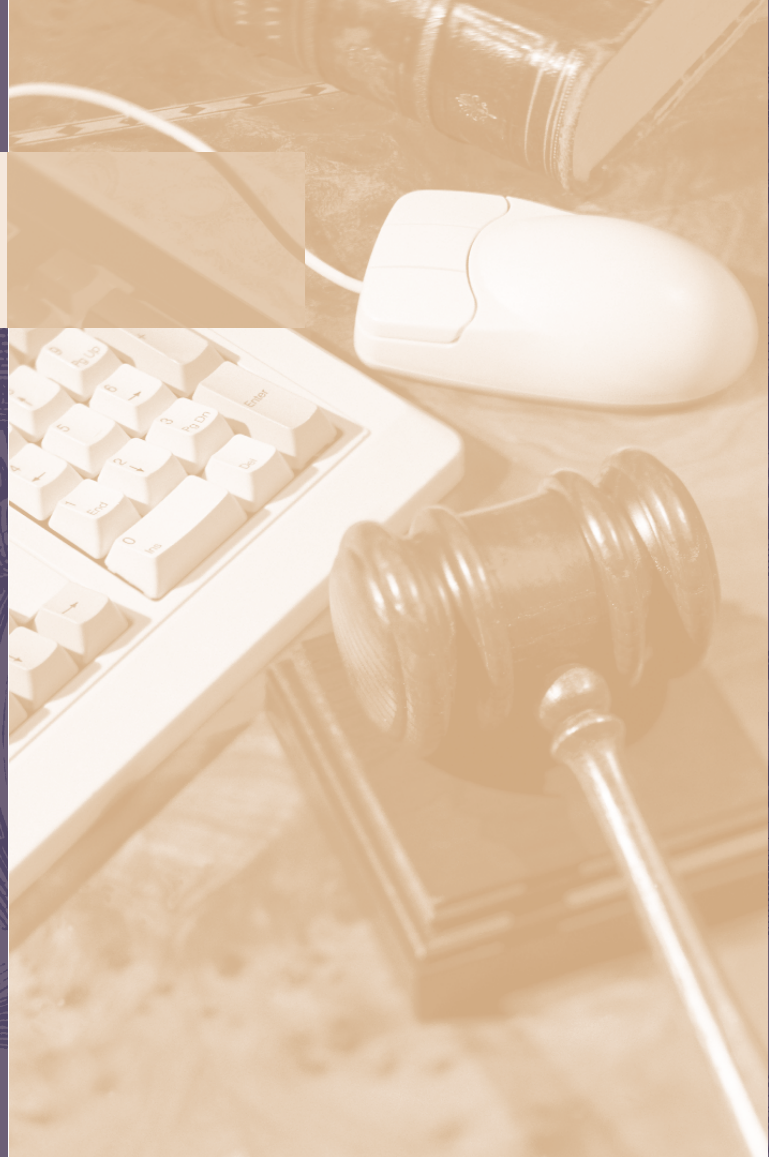
Welcomed by a new, crisp look combining court columns and the State of Washington Seal, the site now includes navigational tool bars, a site map and more. One of the most dramatic changes is a search-engine capability, allowing users to search the site from the front page, making the site accessible to the public.

Court news, updated daily, is now posted directly on the front page. Another constant fixture: a sidebar with links such as court forms, opinions and rules, information on domestic violence, educational resources, frequently asked questions, and a site map.

According to webmasters, a redesign became necessary as the pure volume of information added to the website escalated over time. Having debuted in February of 1996, the site was information-rich, but needed a more modern design to promote usability and navigation. Ultimately the webmasters hope pro-se litigants, judges, and citizens interested in learning more about the courts will feel more at ease on the new site.

New additions and highlights of the Washington Courts Website:

- Maps, Driving Directions: For those searching to find courts located in less-than-obvious places, relief is at hand! The Washington State Courts website now has a mapping feature with the ability to not only show locations on a



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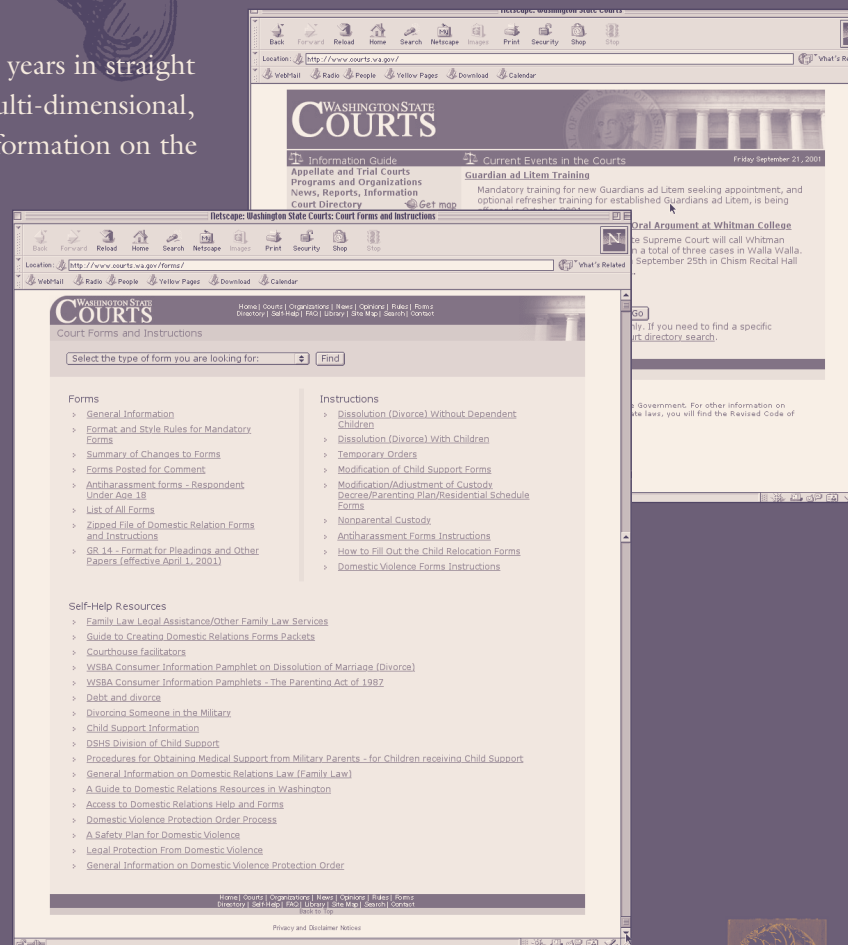
map (with zoom features), but turn-by-turn driving directions. By simply clicking on the court and typing in a starting location, within seconds a user will have specific instructions to the desired location, complete with mileage distance and estimated travel time.

Directions are available from anywhere in the U.S. to the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, OAC offices, most Superior, Juvenile, District, and Municipal courts, and most Washington Tribal Courts. The website also hosts a complete court directory. To access either feature, visit the court's webpage and click on Court Directory or Get Map.

- **Court Forms:** Legal forms can be a hassle, but the fear of using outdated forms is now a thing of the past. The Pattern Forms Committee has posted all pattern forms on the Internet, which can be accessed at www.courts.wa.gov/forms. Forms are offered free of charge in the categories of Antiharassment, Deferred Prosecution, Domestic Relations, Domestic Violence, Emancipation, Felony Judgment and Sentence, Garnishment, Guilty Plea, Misdemeanor Judgment and Sentencing. Also included are self-help resource links, applicable laws and resources, all on one page.
- **New statewide caseload report:** Court users and the public can access statewide caseload trends through a click of the mouse and a stroke of one's keyboard. The newly automated Caseloads of the Courts of Washington was unveiled in 2000, now available online, and accessible via the Washington Courts Homepage.

While the caseloads have been online for years in straight text, the new "online-only" version is multi-dimensional, with several added features, including information on the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Superior Courts and Courts of Limited Jurisdictions in new, current-month, year-to-date and annual tables.

This updated version of the caseload report allows access to all statewide court data in two, easy-to-use formats: data "html" tables and "pdf" reports. Using your computer's web browser, the html format allows quick and easy access to specific statistical tables. Viewed via free, Adobe Acrobat software in pdf format, users can print multiple tables as a single report.



Caseload Highlights

SUPREME COURT HIGHLIGHTS

Filings

◆ The Supreme Court received 1,521 new case filings in 2000, an increase of 90 cases (6.3%) over 1999's incoming caseload of 1,431. This set an unprecedented high for new filings.

◆ Petitions for review make up almost half (48.1%) of the new cases. Discretionary reviews constitute approximately one-quarter (26.2%) and personal restraint petitions 18.6%. The 63 new notices of appeal make up 4.1% of new filings, and the remaining 3.0% is made up of original actions against state officers (12 cases) and petitions for expenditure of public funds (33 cases).

◆ The jump in overall filings is overwhelmingly due to the increase in a single case type: personal restraint petitions. That increase (up 126.4% from 125 cases in 1999 to 283 in 2000) is a second-year climb from 1998's more typical level of 39 cases per year. The jump reflects inmates' responses to the Department of Corrections' one-time, temporary transfer of inmates to the private Crowley County Correctional Facility in Colorado.

◆ Petitions for review declined 6.6% (from 783 cases in 1999 to 731 in 2000), with the decline experienced in both criminal and civil petitions, down 7.2% and 5.9% respectively.

Dispositions

◆ Mirroring increased filings, Supreme Court dispositions increased 6.1% in 2000, to 1,417 cases disposed.

◆ 105 opinions were written during 2000, down somewhat from the prior year's 131 opinions. These made up

7.4% of all cases disposed during the calendar year.

◆ Almost three-quarters (74.3%) of case dispositions were reviews that were not accepted. This proportion has remained fairly level, compared with 1999's 72.5% and 1998's 72.2%.

Pending

◆ Pending caseload as of year-end 2000 increased 28.5% to 735 cases, as compared with the 572 cases at year-end 1999. However, that 163-case jump was overwhelmingly due to the approximately 277 personal restraint petitions which were stayed during 1999-2000, awaiting the opinion in *In re Personal Restraint of Matteson*, 142 Wn.2d 298, 12 P.3d 585 (2000). That opinion was filed 11/02/2000, and Certificate of Finality was issued 1/24/2001. The stayed cases were dismissed in 2001.

◆ Pending civil petitions for review increased slightly (10.9%), returning to the levels comparable to those prior to 1999's 12.0% decline.

◆ Pending caseload decreased for all other types of Supreme Court cases.

COURT OF APPEALS HIGHLIGHTS

Filings

◆ Statewide, 4,188 cases were filed in the Court of Appeals during 2000. Division I, located in Seattle and serving Northwestern Washington, received 1,996 cases – 47.7% of the total Court of Appeals caseload. Division II, located in Tacoma and serving Southwestern Washington, followed, with 1,370 cases (32.7%). Division III, located in Spokane and serving Eastern Washington, made up

the remaining 19.6% of the statewide caseload with the 822 new filings they received in year 2000.

◆ Approximately three-quarters of Court of Appeal filings are appeals, which are split fairly evenly between civil (1,559 cases) and criminal (1,528 cases) matters. The remainder of filings at this court level are made up of personal restraint petitions (17.0% of total filings) and notices of discretionary review (9.3%).

◆ Following 1999's 8.9% decline in filings compared with the prior year, 2000 saw a 4.0% increase over the 1999 level statewide, with Division I experiencing a 4.6% increase and Division II experiencing a 9.8% increase. However, Division III's total filings dropped 5.6% in 2000.

Dispositions

◆ The Court of Appeals disposed of 4,238 cases statewide in 2000. This is down 5.1% from the prior year.

◆ The divisions contributed to statewide dispositions in approximately the same proportions as was true for filings, with Division I's 2,006 making up 47.3% of total dispositions, Division II's 1,335 dispositions making up 31.5%, and Division III's 897 dispositions making up 21.2%.

◆ Although Division III disposed of 15.2% fewer cases in 2000 than in 1999, this decline was tied to a drop in filings. In fact, in 2000, Division III was able to dispose of 9.1% more cases than it had new filings – primarily due to disposition of 358 criminal appeals while only 279 new ones were received.



Division I's similar disposal of more criminal appeals than were newly filed (769 dispositions vs. 702 filings) was offset by its receipt of more new civil appeals (784) than dispositions during that same period (721), resulting in total dispositions (2,006) fairly comparable to incoming caseload (1,996). Division II, with 1,370 filings, received 2.6% more new cases than the number it disposed in 2000 (1,335).

◆ Nearly half (44.2%) of all dispositions were by opinion, with approximately a quarter (24.9%) of those opinions published. Approximately one-third (34.6%) of dispositions were dismissals. Commissioners' rulings accounted for 15.2%. The remaining 6.0% of dispositions were transferred/certified, not accepted, or terminated.

Pending

◆ While pending caseload decreased in Division III (corresponding to their disposition of more cases than were newly filed during 2000), pending cases increased in both Divisions I (2.5%) and II (6.1%).

◆ Statewide, the majority of cases pending at the end of 2000 were awaiting parties' briefs (60.5%). Opinions/orders were in process for 269 (6.7%) of pending cases. The remainder were stayed or awaiting hearing.

SUPERIOR COURT HIGHLIGHTS

Overall Court Activity

◆ Case filings held fairly constant in Washington's superior courts in 2000, continuing a several-year trend of stability.

◆ A total of 280,960 cases were filed, representing a 2.2% increase over 1999 levels.

Following the prior year's slight drop in filings, this small increase restored statewide filings to the approximate 1998 level.

◆ Increases in juvenile dependency (7.4%), criminal and civil (4.1% each), mental illness (3.3%), adoption/paternity (2.2%), and domestic/URESAs (2.1%) cases were largely offset by decreases in guardianship (-9.4%), juvenile offender (-6.5%), and probate (-3.2%) cases.

◆ Filings have remained notably constant relative to population, with 48 filings per 1,000 residents in years 2000 and 1999, and 49 in each of the three years prior to that.

◆ Non-trial proceedings continued their upward swing, with 704,399 held during 2000, the highest level in the last five years. The largest percentage increase was experienced in adoption/paternity matters (12.6% over 1999's 28,281 proceedings), followed by mental illness (up 8.9%) and criminal (up 8.6%).

Criminal Activity

◆ Criminal filings (adult only; see "Juvenile Activity" below for information on juvenile offender cases) make up the second-largest category of cases filed in Washington's superior courts, second only to civil filings. Statewide, 42,783 criminal cases were filed in 2000, constituting 15.2% of the total statewide caseload.

◆ Criminal cases showed a steady and modest increase every year in the last five years, with 42,783 filings in 2000, a 4.1% increase over 1999's 41,091 cases.

◆ Statewide, 31,341 sentences were imposed in criminal cases, up 5.8% from the prior year. The majority of these (23,024 - 73.5%) dictated jail, supervision, and/or probation, while 7,312 (23.3%) were sent to a state institution. The remaining 3.2% involved some other type of sentence.

◆ Proceedings per resolution continued a slow but steady climb from 6.2 in 1996 to 7.3 in 2000.

Civil Activity

◆ Civil cases make up the largest category of filings in Washington State. In 2000, there were 105,567 such cases filed, representing 37.6% of the total statewide superior court caseload.

◆ The 105,567 civil filings in 2000 represent a modest 4.1% increase over 1999's 101,455 cases, reversing the slight declining trend experienced each of the three prior years.

◆ More than one-fourth of the civil caseload (28,262 filings - 26.8%) is made up of "Other Matters Filed with the Clerk." These include tax warrants, abstracts of judgment, transcripts of judgment, and foreign judgments. They do not typically require judicial or court time.

◆ Approximately one-fifth (22,347 cases—21.2%) of civil matters involved property rights. Commercial matters (18,549 cases) make up 17.6% and petitions for protection from domestic violence (16,503 cases) make up 15.6% of the statewide civil caseload. Torts follow, with 10.7% (11,277 cases) of the civil caseload. The remainder of civil cases are made up of other petitions and complaints (4.8%), civil harassment (1.6%), administrative law review (1.1%), appeals from lower court (0.6%), and meretricious relationship cases (0.1%).

◆ The civil proceedings rate has remained remarkably constant, with 0.6 proceedings per resolution each of the last 5 years.

(continued)

Domestic Activity

- ◆ In 2000, 38,173 domestic cases were filed in Washington's superior courts, continuing the relatively stable pattern experienced in the last five years.
- ◆ The overwhelming majority of domestic cases (83.6%) are dissolutions.
- ◆ Of the 38,140 domestic resolutions in 2000, 96.9% were resolved prior to the commencement of a trial.
- ◆ Proceedings per resolution inched up over the last five years, from 1.8 in 1996 to 2.1 in 2000.

Juvenile Activity

- ◆ Statewide, 29,449 juvenile offender cases and 24,415 juvenile dependency cases during 2000 constituted a combined total of 19.2% of the superior courts' overall caseload.
- ◆ Dependency cases increased 7.4% over 1999 levels. Offender cases, on the other hand, declined for the second year in a row, to a low unprecedented since 1994's 28,015 cases.
- ◆ The decline in juvenile offenses was experienced across all categories, with the exception of homicides, which rose from 12 in 1999 to 22 in 2000, and sex crimes, which rose from 545 in 1999 to 615 in 2000.
- ◆ Juvenile sentences declined in 2000, mirroring the decline in filings. More than half of the sentences (57.0%) were to community supervision or some other sentencing option, while 34.2% involved detention, 6.2% state commitment, and 2.6% local commitment.

COURTS OF LIMITED JURISDICTION HIGHLIGHTS

Filings

- ◆ More than 2 million cases were filed in Washington's courts of limited jurisdiction (district and municipal courts) in calendar year 2000:

1,350,614 core cases plus 720,046 parking filings (which are most often handled administratively).

- ◆ District and municipal courts received almost one case for every four Washington residents (excluding parking). This rate has remained fairly constant over the years, with 237 cases per thousand residents in 1996, and 233 in 2000.

- ◆ The core judicial caseload of 1,350,614 cases represents a 3.9% increase over the previous year. Just under two-thirds (62.7%) of that caseload were traffic infraction filings.

- ◆ DUI filings dropped slightly (down 2.1%) for the second year, while petitions for protection from anti-harassment/domestic violence rose slightly (2.6%).

Dispositions

- ◆ Dispositions of core judicial (non-parking) caseload increased 6.8%, consistent with increases in filings. (Note that for infraction and misdemeanor cases, there may be more than one charge disposition per case filing.)

- ◆ The appeal rate for limited jurisdiction court cases continues to be very small. A total of 1,241 appeals of limited jurisdiction cases was filed in 2000, as compared with 1,255 appeals in 1999.

- ◆ Increases in appeals of DUI, traffic infraction, and civil appeals were offset by decreases in appeals of other traffic misdemeanors, non-traffic misdemeanors, and small claims cases. All case types continued to experience an appeals/filing rate well under 1.0%.

- ◆ The notable 21.5% jump in DUI appeals (from 288 in 1999 to 350 in 2000) is related, in part, to issues surrounding accuracy of the breathalyzer.

Proceedings

- ◆ For the third year in a row, contested proceedings increased in Washington's district and municipal courts. Statewide, 153,427 contested proceedings were conducted, of which 17,837 were for parking matters.

- ◆ Jury trials, which constitute 2.2% of contested proceedings, declined 6.1%. Non-jury trials and contested small claims continued their decline of the last few years, dropping from 27,990 in 1996 to 20,546 in 2000 (a 26.6% decline).

Revenue

- ◆ Washington's courts of limited jurisdiction collected \$127,011,418 in fines, forfeitures, penalties and assessments in connection with core judicial (non-parking) cases – a 5.3% increase over 1999's level.

- ◆ \$14,833,620 was collected from parking tickets in those courts which report their parking caseload through JIS, plus the three courts with the largest non-JIS parking caseloads (Bellingham, Bremerton, and Spokane Municipal Courts).

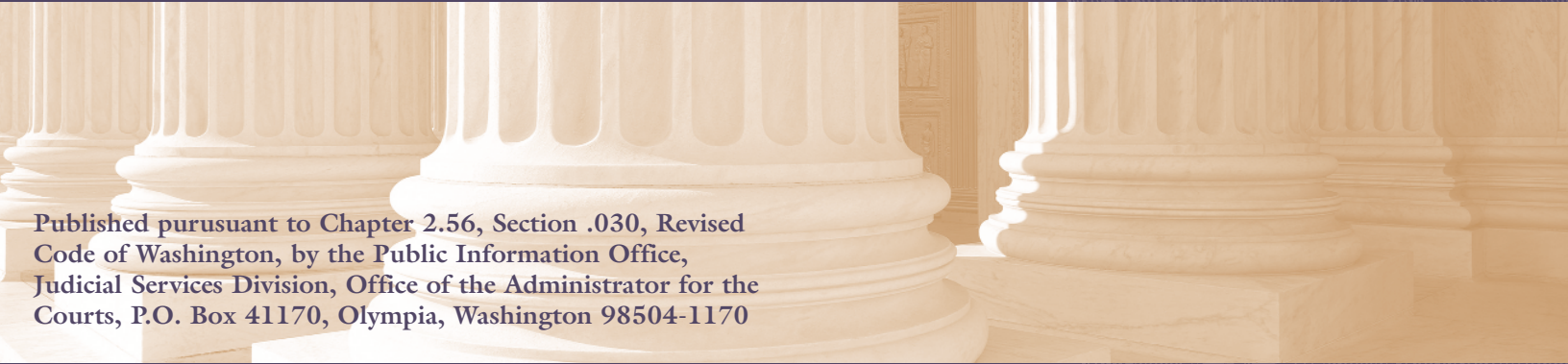
- ◆ In addition, \$20,071,343 was collected under the 30% Public Safety and Education Assessment.

- ◆ Revenue was up in traffic infraction (up 6.5%), DUI/Physical control (up 4.5%), civil (up 3.8%), and non-traffic misdemeanor (up 1.1%) cases. Revenue dropped in small claims (down 1.8%) and other traffic misdemeanor (down 2.3%) cases, consistent with the drop in those filings and dispositions.

- ◆ Changes in the domestic violence revenues reflect elimination of the filing fee for those protective orders.

- ◆ Although total traffic infraction revenue (\$80,029,578) was up 6.5% over 1999 levels (consistent with increased dispositions), revenue per committed infraction declined for the second year in a row, by 2.1%, to \$82.05.





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