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2016

# Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Program

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REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE



# INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of the Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Programs in Washington State and shows how a small investment of funds reaps great financial benefits, but more importantly provides better outcomes for children and families. The Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Program (FJCIP) incorporates Unified Family Court (UFC) principles in a model that allows flexible implementation centered on core elements including stable leadership, education, and case management support.

The statewide program promotes a system of local improvements that are incremental and measurable. Funding for the FJCIP makes system improvements possible in each court, large or small, regardless of calendaring systems, number of judges, and availability of local resources. The goal of this effort is to establish judicial and court manager leadership to institute improvements in family and juvenile court that are consistent with UFC principles. This report is not comprehensive, but provides examples of some of the work that FJCIP courts are performing as well as some of the challenges.

## HISTORY

The FJCIP was created in 2008 as a result of the partnership between the legislative branch and the judicial branch. The legislature wanted to improve the dependency system, consistent with UFC principles, and the courts agreed and wanted improvements to be focused on local circumstances. 2SHB 2822 established the Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Program (FJCIP), which funds efforts to reform and enhance court systems that manage family and juvenile cases. The guiding principles for reform are based on the Unified Family Court methodology as well as state and federal timelines related to processing dependency cases. The FJCIP is a balanced approach that directs the dependency reform efforts but allows courts autonomy in deciding how to focus their efforts within the context of UFC.

The FJCIP also requires judicial officers to receive a minimum of 30 hours of topic-specific training in order to preside over family and juvenile cases.

Initially, \$800,000 of state funding provided grants to 16 sites across the state. The money primarily funded case coordinators who worked with the juvenile court/UFC chief judges to conduct local court analysis of service delivery. Findings from the dependency timeliness report were used to establish local improvement plans to facilitate improvements to court practices and by using the UFC principles as a guide.

Funding was reduced after the first year and currently \$598,819 is allotted for FJCIP annually. The funding reduction precluded spending funds on innovative projects, training and travel. Funding covers 83% of the salaries and benefits for the FJCIP coordinator positions. Despite these cuts, there are 13 superior courts continuing to participate in the FJCIP program: Asotin, Columbia and Garfield; Chelan; Clallam; Jefferson; Island; King; Kitsap; Pierce; Snohomish; Spokane; and Thurston. This report will show that the small annual investment of less than \$600,000 realizes financial benefits over time, not to mention better outcomes for children and families.

FJCIP continues to hold the promise that local reform efforts can be accomplished based on a set of universal best practice principles. During these years of maintenance, our mission is to develop projects within existing resources that yield statewide benefit, implement a system of evaluating statewide and local projects, and design a communication plan between the sites and the legislature. By these actions, the FJCIP will prove to be a solid investment of state funds.

The primary focus for the administration of FJCIP is working with stakeholders in family and juvenile court operations for dependency cases, and to coordinate dependency reform efforts.



# REPORTING

RCW 2.56.230 requires the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to compile a financial report comparing the spending plan to actual expenditures and submit it to the appropriate committees of the legislature. When state funding for the FJCIP program was cut in 2009, salaries and benefits of FJCIP coordinators became the primary funding objective for the program, and other expenses, such as training, office supplies, etc., were not reimbursed due to lack of funding. The “Actual Expenditures” listed below are the amounts reimbursed per contract with AOC. For most of these counties, the contracted amount does not cover the full cost to the counties for salaries and benefits for the coordinator position, nor does it cover other costs associated with the projects and programs implemented by those courts.

## FJCIP Expenditures FY2016

County	Spending Plan (AOC Contract)	Actual Expenditures
Asotin/Columbia/Garfield	\$18,720.00	\$17,944.50
Chelan	\$19,325.00	\$19,325.00
Clallam	\$29,673.00	\$28,105.67
Island	\$19,989.00	\$19,989.00
Jefferson	\$14,420.00	\$14,420.00
King	\$85,175.00	\$90,127.03
Kitsap	\$90,146.00	\$91,762.68
Pierce	\$108,160.00	\$100,707.84
Snohomish	\$93,946.00	\$93,946.00
Spokane	\$56,000.00	\$58,751.59
Thurston	\$63,265.00	\$63,739.69
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$598,819.00</b>	<b>\$598,819.00</b>



The courts have come to rely on the Interactive Dependency Timeliness Report (IDTR), a web-based application housed at AOC. The tool allows users to view data for the state, their own county, or any other county. Users specify data filter criteria and level of detail allowing them to view data all along the spectrum from broad state-to-county or county-to-county comparisons to case-specific information. Improvements to the data exchange schedule between the AOC and Children’s Administration allow for more frequent updates to the interactive reports, supplying users with information needed to rapidly identify trends and areas needing attention. Appendix A includes tables that show the performance of FJCIP courts compared to other courts in Washington State in regard to dependency timeliness indicators.

FJCIP courts submit semi-annual reports to AOC providing a comprehensive review of data to identify any trends, address any barriers, and provide possible solutions. Based on these reports, the following information is provided.

FJCIP courts meet the requirements established in RCW 2.56.230:

- By assigning a chief judge to the family and juvenile court for a minimum of two years;
- By implementing one judicial team hearing all of the proceedings in a case involving one family; and
- By ensuring judicial officers receive a minimum of 30 hours in specialized topics related to family and juvenile matters within 6 months of assuming duties in family and juvenile court. (Please see Appendix B for a list of training judicial officers and FJCIP coordinators received in 2016, in excess of the minimum required 30 hours).

FJCIP grant funding is provided to the courts to hire FJCIP coordinators. These staff work with the assigned chief judge, conduct local analysis, understand the timeliness indicators, and lead local reform efforts identified through the FJCIP project. Coordinators regularly access the Interactive Dependency Timeliness Report. This data assists coordinators in tracking individual cases and assessing trends in their dependency court system. By providing case management, coordinators recognize challenges, convene stakeholder groups to develop solutions, and develop and implement projects to address local court needs. Some coordinators also implement specific training for their judicial officers and dependency court partners. The following are some highlights of site-specific projects FJCIP courts have implemented in 2016.

## REUNIFICATION

### Programs Supporting Parents

#### **ASOTIN/COLUMBIA/GARFIELD Parent Information Booklets**

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In collaboration with attorneys, Children’s Administration, guardians ad litem, and the judge, the FJCIP coordinator created information booklets for parents outlining the dependency process, service providers, and tips for navigating the child welfare system in their location. Courts are considering full implementation of the Parents for Parents program, but need funding. In the meantime, these booklets are a great resource for the parents.

#### **ISLAND Dependency 101 Training**

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The FJCIP coordinator facilitates Dependency 101 training which provides parents navigating the dependency process with greater understanding and familiarity of support services and options for reunification. Because of low case numbers in Island County, the coordinator is able to provide this training one-on-one with the parent(s) on an as-needed basis.



## **SPOKANE Expanded Program**

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The Parents for Parents (P4P) program applied and received additional funding to support an expanded program component that concentrates on providing education and resources to families who attend the sessions. The funding will support the program administration and the first stage of evaluation of the P4P program to determine whether it can be considered an evidence based program.

## **SPOKANE Protein Project**

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Juvenile court staff, attorneys, social workers, and guardians ad litem (GAL) staff were trained by Dr. Kristen Allott of Dynamic Brains Consulting about optimizing brain functions in court or other high stakes settings. Dr. Allott presented on how trauma and hypoglycemia impacts the brain. Through the training, staff learned that protein can help with sleep, energy levels, stable moods, decreased depression, and increased metabolism. Based on this information, Parents for Parents (P4P) program worked with juvenile court staff to put in place a policy that would allow shelter care families to have protein in the lobby prior to their hearings. The P4P program also worked with the Spokane Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) to propose to outside agencies to obtain a supply of healthy protein snacks, with the hopes of making the program more sustainable.

## **SPOKANE HOPE Class for Inmates**

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The Helping Other Parents Engage (HOPE) Class (Dependency 101) is now provided on a monthly basis at the Geiger Correctional Center, alternating between the men's and women's units. Through a collaboration with the Empire Health Foundation and the Parents for Parents Program, a video was filmed that features information and insight from a guardian ad litem, two parent attorneys, an assistant Attorney General, a Court Commissioner, a social worker, and six parent allies. The video provides a unique opportunity for students to hear from a number of child welfare partners. The 90-minute video can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/8INfe0uqots>.

## **THURSTON Food 4 Parents**

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In collaboration with Family Education and Support Services and with donations from the Thurston County Food Bank, Thurston County Family Court will be stocking a cabinet with healthy snacks and water for dependency participants to enjoy before, during or after their court hearing. The rolling cabinet is placed in front of the courtroom door for all dependency calendars, shelter care hearings, family recovery court, and other dependency related matters. This project should improve parental decision-making and result in more amicable engagement during court proceedings.

# Reunification Day

## **KING**

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The FJCIP in King County planned and hosted the 7th Annual Reunification Day celebration. KCTV produced a video for the event which can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SomexH8AR1o>.

# Family Treatment Court

## **CLALLAM** **Living in Families Together (LIFT) Court**

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The LIFT Court meets every week to keep parents on track and results in faster resolution times for reuniting a family or moving a case toward termination. Based on evidence-based drug court principles, this family therapeutic court assists with substance abuse.

## **JEFFERSON** **Family Therapeutic Court (FTC)**

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The FTC revised policy to allow parents to still participate in FTC if one parent moved to another county and still had children in dependency in Jefferson County.

## **KING** **Family Treatment Court (FTC)**

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King County's FTC received a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant which allowed for additional staff to be hired, enabling expansion of the Kent Family Treatment Court calendar from a half-day to a full-day each week. Family Treatment Court is now able to serve 65 families.



## **PIERCE** **Family Recovery Court (FRC)**

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A workgroup was created to explore ways to increase participation as referrals to the program were decreasing. The FJCIP coordinator worked with the Family Recovery Court judge and stakeholders to brainstorm ways to increase participation in this program. In July 2016, a panel presentation was provided to parents' attorneys to better inform them regarding the benefits their clients can receive from participation in this program. Additionally, the Family Recovery Court screenings were moved from superior court to juvenile court and switched from a morning docket to an afternoon docket in hopes this might better engage parents in the program. Also, the Parent Allies from the Parents for Parents program have partnered with the Family Recovery Court and will attempt to actively engage FRC parents through phone calls, help with transportation, and recovery support.

## Baby Teams

### **PIERCE** **Best for Babies CASA Pilot Project / Baby Court Docket**

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The initial Baby Court docket began in October 2016. This specialized docket is held on the second Friday of each month and incorporates the Best for Babies CASA Pilot Project cases. One judicial officer presides over Baby Court cases. Children's Administration is an active participant and there is a social worker assigned to the Baby Court. Currently Baby Court cases are being recruited only from the Pierce East catchment area. Once the Pierce East Baby Court social worker's caseload is filled, social workers will be identified for Baby Court from the Pierce South and the Pierce West catchment areas, and the program will roll out county-wide. Stakeholders from the Attorney General's Office, Department of Assigned Counsel, and juvenile court staff and the judge attended Zero to Three's Cross Sites Meeting in October — an excellent opportunity to cross train and network with the experts in the field. A case criterion was developed to ensure cases are a good fit for the program. Additionally, a consent agreement was created to ensure parents participating in Baby Court consent to the program parameters, including having their child's dependency case reviewed by the judge every 60 days and participating in the Community Advisory Team staffing approximately every 6-8 weeks. The goal is to build capacity to 20 docketed cases (which may include sibling groups under age 3).

### **SNOHOMISH** **Birth to Three in Dependency**

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In Snohomish County, considerable effort is occurring to improve the social-emotional health of their youngest of children and their families. On average, 10 infants continue to enter dependency each month in Snohomish County. Progress is being made on multiple fronts to address the underlying cause — heroin/opioid use/addiction. The lack of resources and services continues to have a profoundly negative impact. Heroin and other opioid use by parents has been well-documented as the single largest cause of dependency (over 98% of cases with children under 1 year of age).

**Percentage and count of cases coming into dependency in which the child is under 1 year old when the dependency is filed**

<b>Court</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Snohomish	24%	24%	23%	24%	32%	31%	30%
Count of Cases	—	—	—	—	141	145	118
State	25%	26%	26%	27%	26%	27%	28%
King	27%	28%	26%	25%	25%	27%	26%
Pierce	25%	29%	27%	29%	27%	27%	30%
Spokane	31%	31%	29%	29%	27%	28%	30%

Two primary efforts continue to move forward, as a result of the planning strategies:

- Dependency: The Musical - Toward the goal of increased public awareness.
- “Project Reunite” at “Homeward House” in Everett - Where parents and infants forge a path to wellness and their way home.

## Other Reunification Efforts

### **PIERCE** **Tulane Readiness Factors Workgroup**

A workgroup was formed to create a common language that could be utilized across all stakeholder groups when talking with parents about what the court looks at when returning children home. The Tulane Readiness Factors were used as a basis. These factors are research based benchmarks for assessing parents' response to treatment and their readiness for reunification. The workgroup felt the Tulane Readiness Factors would be better presented as a goal all stakeholder groups can strive toward, as opposed to singling out parents for participation. For this reason, the workgroup has modified the wording used in Tulane's version and has created the mnemonic device “POWER-G” in hopes it will help all stakeholders with easy recall:

#### POWER-G

- PUT the child first.
- Take OWNERSHIP of your role/responsibility in the process.
- WORK together as a team.
- EFFORT – Give 100%!
- RESPECT each other's roles in the process.
- GROUNDED with natural supports; the parents are able to access help from their support system in times of need.

# ADOPTIONS

## **KING** **Open Adoption Enforcement**

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Some issues have arisen where; 1) biological parents can't access their court case to obtain a copy of Open Adoption Agreement (OAA) as parental rights have been terminated and the parents then have no legal standing; and 2) there is no process in place for either biological or adoptive parents to address when someone is not following the OAA. A workgroup was formed and a process was developed and implemented. The biological parent can file a motion, set before the lead dependency judge to request a copy of OAA. Either biological or adoptive parent can file an Enforcement of OAA action. The adoption paralegal and Family Law Info Center are able to provide facilitation assistance to those appearing pro se. Instructions and forms can be found on the King County Court website at [www.kingcounty.gov/courts/FamilyCourt/services/adoption-services](http://www.kingcounty.gov/courts/FamilyCourt/services/adoption-services).

## **PIERCE** **Adoption Workgroup**

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The FJCIP coordinator continues to track all legally free cases in order to better understand whether trends are developing within the various adoption processes (home study delays, adoption support processing, etc.). The Adoption Workgroup continues to meet approximately every six weeks to discuss trends and barriers to the adoption process and create solutions. Because of increased workload, staff guardians ad litem (GAL) are needing to withdraw from dependency cases prior to finalization of the adoption. Juvenile Court is working to hire additional GAL staff to help reduce caseloads. The FJCIP coordinator continues to work with dependency supervisors and the commissioner presiding over the Legally Free docket to ensure that strong advocacy continues until permanency is established. The FJCIP coordinator also ensures legally free children receive legal representation per the requirements of 2ESSB 6126. Duties include: drafting the orders appointing, tracking attorney appointments in an effort to distribute legally free cases equally and attempt to balance attorneys' caseloads so they meet the designated caseload parameters, and notifying the attorney and parties to the case of the appointment.

# TIMELINESS

## **PIERCE** **Early Paternity Pilot Project**

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Pierce County's Establishing Biological Paternity Early Pilot Project, funded by the AOC Court Improvement Program grant, concluded August 2016. Because of the success of the project, Pierce County Juvenile Court agreed to fund this program through the end of 2016. Children's Administration and Office of Public Defense agreed to support the project through 2017. The following details some of the findings from the pilot:

- Number of cases with genetic testing completed: 84
- Average time between order for DNA test and results: 18.2 days
- Prior to the pilot project, data was not kept regarding the length of time from request for DNA test to results. Stakeholders' anecdotal estimates for best case scenarios was a minimum of six weeks. Several stakeholders reported results were received on average 3-4 months after testing was ordered. One stakeholder indicated she had cases in which the results were received more than a year after paternity testing was ordered.

Cost savings as a direct result of establishing biological paternity early included:

- Ten children were placed with their biological father.
- Five children were placed with paternal relatives.
- Sixty-four cases did not require publication due to having an identified biological father.
- Eleven alleged fathers were dismissed as they were not a genetic match. Services including visitation, psychological evaluations, parenting assessments, substance abuse evaluations, etc., had been referred and were underway for non-biological fathers. Parents' attorneys withdrew, as their client was dismissed from the case. With the dismissal of alleged fathers that are excluded, social workers, CASAs, GALs and parents' attorneys use their time more productively and may continue to seek out the biological father as a potential resource.
- Travel costs paid by Children's Administration for the alleged father to get to the testing site was minimized, as most tests were conducted at the court.

### **THURSTON Early Paternity Pilot Project**

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The Establishing Biological Paternity Early Project was a great success, but came to a close August 31, 2016 after two years in operation. Thurston County Dependency stakeholders met to develop a similar program for genetic testing. The FJCIP coordinator will continue to be the point of contact in the courts for coordinating testing, scheduling, and disseminating test results. Per state contract, LabCorp offers testing at \$30 per case; the Department has agreed to absorb the cost. Typically, lab fees for genetic testing for court cases are approximately \$525 per case. Cost savings realized for the 26 cases that completed testing via this project was \$13,650.

In three cases, the child was permanently placed with the father as follows:

- One child was placed in father's home approximately one month after paternity was determined.
- A second child was placed in the biological father's home approximately three months after paternity was determined via genetic testing. After six months, the dependency was dismissed.
- The third child was transitioned into the father's home starting approximately four months after paternity was determined via genetic testing and placed in father's home permanently approximately six months after paternity was determined.

### **THURSTON Weekly Dependency Docket**

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The FJCIP coordinator continues to prepare and manage the weekly docket. Cases with an attorney for the child are now being highlighted so the judge can hear these cases in a concurrent fashion, allowing those attorneys to spend less time in court waiting for their case to be called and more time working on their clients' cases.

# Dependency and Domestic Relations

## ASOTIN/COLUMBIA/GARFIELD

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Attorneys and guardians ad litem refer parents to the FJCIP coordinator to assist with pro se paperwork for parenting plans, separations or dissolutions.

## CHELAN

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Chelan FJCIP created a Family Court/Domestic Division with a new Family Court Navigator position to be a point of reference for dependency case workers and referrals of clients for family law assistance at no cost.

## CLALLAM

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The FJCIP coordinator appears at the juvenile facility twice per month during regular dependency calendars to provide forms and assistance for completing parenting plans and nonparental custody actions. Services are free and no appointment is needed. This allows the dependency to be dismissed and keeps children safe.

## ISLAND

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The FJCIP coordinator tracks cases flagged by the clerk that are involved in both family law and dependency systems. Before parties proceed to trial on family law issues, mandatory mediation must occur.

## KITSAP

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The FJCIP coordinator recognized a delay and disconnect between time of concurrent jurisdiction and filing parenting plans. Beginning in January 2016, the coordinator is meeting with dependency parents to complete parenting plans. Since that time the number of concurrent jurisdictions doubled and of these, 75 percent of dependency cases were dismissed. The FJCIP coordinator meets with clients to complete or assist with parentage, dissolutions, parenting plans and modifications. A new process was put in place to allow for a filing fee waiver to be signed by the commissioner ex parte and parents can now file at juvenile court. Parents with agreed orders can set up their case for early review and present the parenting plan in anticipation that the case will be dismissed.

## SNOHOMISH

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The FJCIP coordinator assists with Domestic Status Conference Hearings and tracks the setting of cases to this calendar, the progress of the cases, and the outcomes to assess effectiveness of the hearings and process, toward the goal of greater efficiencies and improved timeliness to resolution. Recently the coordinator began an effort to check parties in prior to the hearing and assess at that time where their case stands, what documents and/or assistance they may need and, as possible, provide them with these before the hearing. The goal is that parties and their cases will be better prepared to go before the judge and move their cases forward.

## THURSTON

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The FJCIP coordinator works with numerous parties in dependency actions, assisting them with the preparation, filing and completion of family law cases in order to enter parenting plans so that the dependency action can be dismissed. In 2016, 40 family law cases have been completed resulting in dependency dismissal, and 18 cases were pending.

## Multi-System Youth

### KITSAP

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The intake interview tool was revised to identify youth at higher risk for human trafficking. The FJCIP coordinator works with dual system youth and coordinates with collateral agencies and provides the juvenile and parents/guardians with support to achieve permanency. The coordinator attends all dependency and offender hearings to provide the judicial officer with updates on youth and family programs.

## TRENDS

### CHELAN

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Dependency and termination of parental rights (TPR) filings are up. Dependency filings increased 22% and TPR filings increased 71%. There is an increase in continuances, causing noncompliance with the 75-day fact finding indicator. Frequently the cases settle and are dismissed. The court is considering holding settlement meetings earlier in the case in an attempt to reach resolution sooner in the process. However, some parents need time to take everything in before they are ready to engage in the process. Another solution could be to change the statute to allow good cause exceptions under certain circumstances.

### KING

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Overall dependency filings are down significantly this year. King South went from 30 filings per month to 17 filings. The FJCIP coordinator is working with the department and the Attorney General's Office to determine if the decrease in filings is due to social worker turnover, or whether there is some other reason for the decrease.

### KITSAP

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Kitsap County is seeing an increase in sexting, provocative photos, child pornography, etc., on youth mobile devices. Kitsap County has also seen an increase in parental assaults when parents remove those devices from the youth. Additionally, human trafficking and juvenile mental health illnesses are on the rise.

# BARRIERS

A barrier that affects all FJCIP courts is funding. While the courts are appreciative of funding received from the legislature for the Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Program, it only provides 83% of the salaries and benefits expenses for the FJCIP Coordinators. In order to fully fund these important positions, \$718,609 is required, compared to the \$598,819 which is currently allocated by the legislature. Some counties struggle to provide the difference in funding, in order to keep the FJCIP coordinator position whole.

The following describes other barriers some of the courts are experiencing in implementing the FJCIP program:

## JEFFERSON

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Lack of services in a small rural county delays permanency for dependent children. The required parenting classes are unavailable, and there is a lack of housing and jobs for parents who are trying to reunify with their children.

## KING

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A significant budget decrease reduced four court commissioner positions (one family law; two dependency; one ex parte). The dependency and ex parte commissioner positions will be replaced with two judges starting in 2017. The FJCIP coordinator developed a comprehensive dependency coordinator/bailiff guide to assist with the transition, and is coordinating a full-day training session for the incoming judges, along with training notebooks.



## **KITSAP**

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Establishing paternity causes delay in cases being dismissed. A committee will be meeting to put a process in place with the anticipated goal of dual process of DNA testing through the department and parentage through the Prosecuting Attorney's office. Hearings scheduled at the other courthouse create challenges with follow-through on appointments and hearings. The new plain language family law forms have caused some delays.

## **PIERCE**

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Pierce County is searching for funding to continue the Establishing Biological Paternity Early Project.

## **SNOHOMISH**

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Limited or insufficient resources to address underlying issues, largely of addiction, continue to impact the courts and dependency cases. Proportion of cases with children under one year of age, time to permanency, and increased re-dependency rates are among the areas that appear to be directly impacted. Funding is needed to establish services and facilities to expand substance abuse treatment, available housing, and increase early intervention and child development support systems.

## **THURSTON**

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Because of budget cuts and the lack of funding with which to hire a receptionist in the court administration office, all staff, including the FJCIP coordinator, continue to assist with answering the phones and helping walk-ins approximately two days per week. Barriers in assisting with Parenting Plan actions arise mostly in affecting service of process on the responding party. Many of the parent attorneys are not willing to work with their client to, at minimum, obtain an Acceptance of Service signed by the party. Other parent attorneys offer to help, but fail to communicate or respond to inquiry as to whether service has been achieved leaving the matter to be presented or addressed at the dismissal hearing. Many responding parties are homeless or not in contact with their attorney or the department and have provided no contact information. Barriers occur in scheduling genetic testing when the testing parent is homeless or does not have any contact information or is unable or unwilling to participate in the testing process.

# SUMMARY

In summary, FJCIP courts provide meaningful assistance and services to families and other stakeholders involved in dependency court. These services can impact several kinds of outcomes, ranging from a parent's understanding of court processes to providing more relevant information to the decision-makers. Contributions of FJCIP courts to legal outcomes and real-life outcomes are similarly influenced by court environment and by the range of services and programs available in the jurisdiction. Because these FJCIP courts are able to provide dedicated staff to manage court processes for dependency cases, and under judicial leadership, provide assistance to convene stakeholder groups to work collaboratively on systemic improvements, dependency outcomes are improving in these courts compared to courts who do not have these resources.

As detailed in the data provided in Appendix A, FJCIP courts generally perform better than other courts on the timeliness measures. One can conclude this is due to a court's focus on improving the dependency court processes with dedicated staff to monitor and bring attention to areas that need to be addressed.

With the assistance of AOC staff and the University of Washington Court Improvement Training Academy, in 2016 the FJCIP coordinators formed a Community of Practice which allows the coordinators to meet online once per month and participate in site visits twice per year. These venues allow the opportunity for coordinators to share their innovative ideas, ask questions, and work together toward continuous quality improvement.

Continued funding for the FJCIP program is appreciated, and the consideration of full funding for the FJCIP coordinator positions is requested. The ultimate goal is for all dependency courts in Washington State to have funds available to support an FJCIP Coordinator so that all could benefit from improved outcomes.

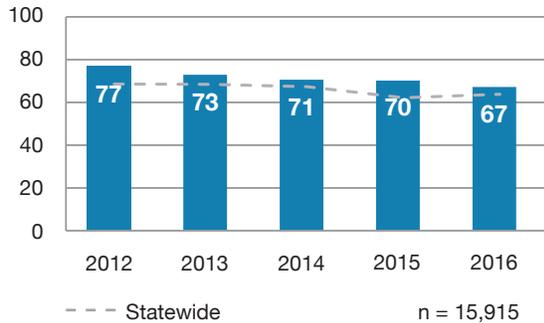
While addressing the shortfall in funding for FJCIPs is important, what is impacting our cases and caseloads and timeliness more than anything else is the lack of treatment programs/facilities, especially inpatient treatment for mothers with infants. The majority of our dependency cases involve addiction, primarily heroin/opioids. Without adequate and appropriate treatment programs available at the local level, we are seeing more cases with infants, longer times to permanency, and commensurate increase in recidivism rates. FJCIP courts can shine a light on barriers preventing dependency cases from moving forward, but if the necessary resources are not available for families, it creates a lag in timeliness and a huge impact on the family.



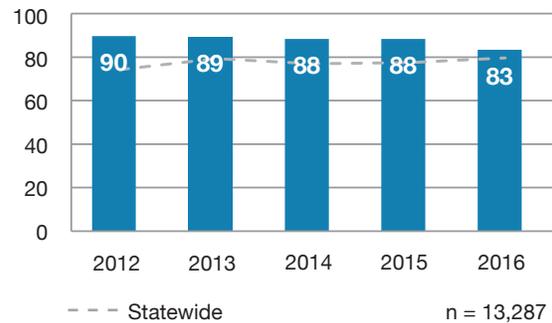
# APPENDIX A

## Performance of the FJCIP Courts on the Dependency Timeliness Indicators

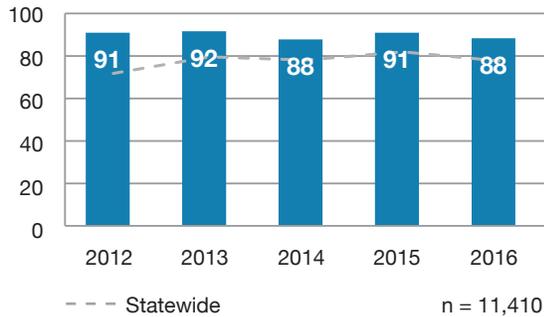
**Percent of Cases with Fact-Finding within 75 Days**



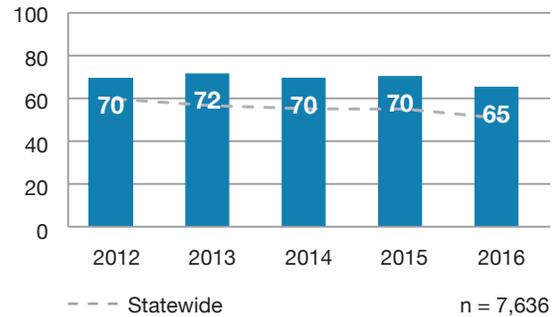
**Percent of First Dependency Review Hearings within Six Months**



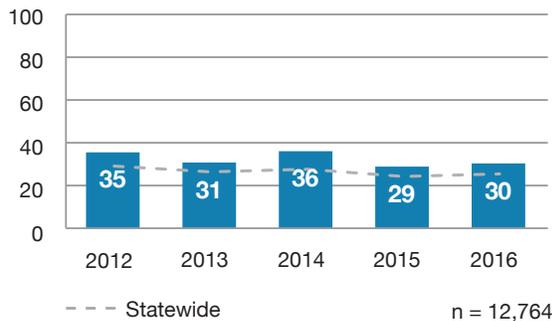
**Percent of Cases with Permanency Planning Hearing within 12 Months**



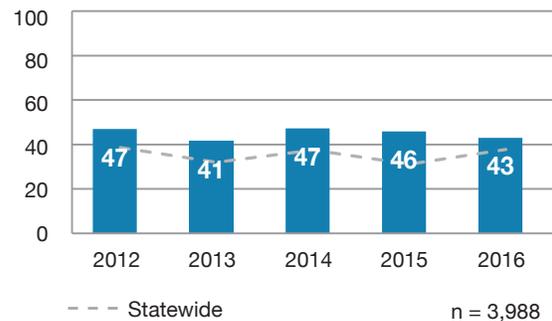
**Percent of Cases with TPR Filed Before 15 Months of Out-of-Home Care**



**Percent of Cases with Permanency Before 15 Months of Out-of-Home Care**



**Percent of Cases with Adoption Completed within Six Months of Termination Order**



# APPENDIX B

## Training Beyond the 30-Hours Required for Judicial Officers

### TRAINING OF FJCIP JUDICIAL OFFICERS IN 2016

- 14 judges and commissioners attended the 2016 Children’s Justice Conference offering a variety of courses related to child welfare and well-being
- 60 attended the Superior Court Judges’ Association Spring Program which included the following sessions:
  - Grace Under Fire: Interactions with Litigants with High Conflict Personalities
  - Family Law Update
  - The Power of the Robe: Breaking the Cycle: School to Prison Pipeline
  - Enhancing Successful Outcomes for LGBTQ Youth in Washington Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems
  - State and Tribal Courts: A Bridge to Collaboration
  - Children of Incarcerated Parents: Keeping Families Together
  - Ethics and Social Media
- 5 attended the UW Court Improvement Training Academy Dependency Training focused on child safety, visitation and trauma
- 5 attended the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Conference, which included a variety of child welfare and juvenile justice sessions
- 2 attended the NCJFCJ Child Abuse and Neglect Institute training
- 3 attended Adolescent Brain Development and the Effects of Trauma on Youth
- 3 attended Respect and Inclusion Training
- 2 attended the Domestic Violence Symposium
- 3 attended Introduction to Court Call
- 2 attended Sexting and Cyberbullying
- 2 attended the National Drug Court Convention
- 2 attended Preventing Child Sexual Abuse through Community Education
- Judges and Commissioners attended the following array of training sessions individually:
  - Pierce County Dependency Retreat
  - Substance Abuse, Treatment and Dependency: Beyond Heroin in Snohomish County
  - Battered Women’s Justice Project
  - Hawaii Family Court Judges on Domestic Violence and Supervised Visitation
  - Train the Trainer Listening Session
  - Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA) Brown Bag
  - Three-Prong Approach to Incentives and Sanctions
  - Most Valuable Privilege
  - Guardian Ad Litem Training: Domestic Violence, Child Development, Interviewing, Chemical Dependency
  - Juvenile Drug Court Training
  - Impact of Addiction on Families

## TRAINING OF FJCIP COORDINATORS IN 2016

- 10 FJCIP Coordinators attended the 2016 Children’s Justice Conference offering a variety of courses related to child welfare and well-being
- 5 attended the UW Court Improvement Training Academy Dependency Training focused on child safety, visitation and trauma
- FJCIP coordinators attended the following array of training sessions individually:
  - Creating Safe Places – Working with Families in Crises
  - Domestic Violence Symposium
  - Trauma informed Approaches to Domestic Violence
  - Exposure to Adverse Child Experiences and Resiliency
  - Clark/Cowlitz Permanency Summit
  - Meeting Mindfulness: An Introductory Retreat
  - SharePoint
  - Developmental and Mental Health training
  - UCCJEA Brown Bag
  - Substance Abuse, Treatment and Dependency: Beyond Heroin Snohomish County
  - Family Assessment Response (FAR) Presentation
  - How to Beat a Drug Test
  - Impact of Addiction on Families
  - Introduction to Court Call
  - Important Improvements to Oral Fluid Screening Technology
  - Preventing Child Sexual Abuse through Community Education
  - Respect and Inclusion
  - Drug Testing Training
  - Impact of Addiction on Families Strategic Action Team Organization Meeting
  - Resources to Help Child Welfare Professionals Understand Heroin and Prescription Pain Medication Epidemic



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