



# **The JIS Customer and Services Profile**

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# The JIS Customer and Services Profile

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a snap-shot view of the Judicial Information System (JIS) customers and the services being provided to them. Moreover, this document also highlights services currently not being delivered by the JIS systems but are required or have been requested by the court customer.

This document is also designed to provide a big-picture view of the court customer landscape to expose any commonalities with court work processes, court business drivers, and court best practices.

## 2. Background

Customers of the Washington State JIS have a broad and varied profile. From an Appellate Court case manager using ACORDS to a title company checking backgrounds on new home buyers, JIS customers comprise a wide range of end users motivated by different goals, all with a need to access accurate and timely information.

As Tom Clarke, former ISD Director stated, “JIS supports automation in juvenile, municipal, district, superior, and appellate courts and over 10,000 users access data in the JIS, including judges, court staff, attorneys, law enforcement, and private sector businesses.”<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1 Provided Services

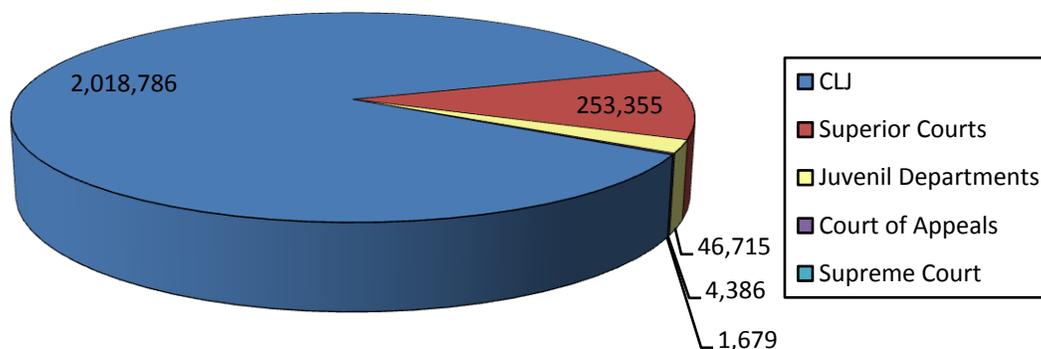
The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) provides a range of technology services that support the court customer’s automation needs. The courts are provided network access, computer equipment and maintenance, custom application development and support, hands-on training, and full-time customer service. The initial set of applications, developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s at the AOC, are referred to as the “legacy” applications. Application development has been ongoing since then; additional functionality continues to be added to the legacy systems and newer applications were released in the 1990s and early 2000s.

## 3. The JIS Customer – Viewed by Court Level

To gain a full view of JIS court customers, it is appropriate to break the customer profile down by court level. There are four distinct levels to the Washington courts: the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, the Superior Court (including Juvenile Departments), and the Courts of Limited Jurisdiction. All of these levels currently use case management systems designed for their level and business needs.

**Graph 3.a** provides a comparison of the number of cases filed at each court level in 2004.

Graph 3.a - 2004 Caseloads of the Courts of Washington by Court Level <sup>3</sup>



## 4. The Supreme Court Customer

### 4.1 Who they are, what they do

The Supreme Court is the state's highest court. Its opinions are published, become the law of the state, and set precedent for subsequent cases decided in Washington.

The Supreme Court consists of nine elected justices and supported by staff including the following roles: Bailiff, Clerk, Commissioner, Court Administrator, Reporter of Decisions, Law Clerk, and Law Librarian. <sup>4</sup>

The Supreme Court provides direction and guidance to the Administrator for the Courts who is responsible for overall management of the AOC.

## 5. The Court of Appeals Customer

### 5.1 Who they are, what they do

Most cases appealed from superior courts go directly to the Court of Appeals (COA). It is a non-discretionary appellate court--it must accept all appeals filed with it. The Court of Appeals has authority to reverse (overrule), remand (send back to the lower court), modify, or affirm the decisions of lower courts.<sup>6</sup>

The Court of Appeals is made up of 22 judges and is supported by a staff with job functions consisting of:

- Clerks of the Court
- Commissioners
- Law Clerks
- Judicial Assistants
- Staff Attorneys
- Case Manager

The COA is comprised of three regional divisions:

- Division I – which serves northwest counties and has 10 judges
- Division II – which serves southwest counties and has 7 judges
- Division III – which serves eastern Washington and has 5 judges

## 6. The Superior Court Customer

### 6.1 Who they are, what they do

Because there is no limit on the types of civil and criminal cases heard, Superior Courts are called *general jurisdiction* courts. Superior Courts also have authority to hear cases appealed from Courts of Limited Jurisdiction. <sup>8</sup>

Superior Courts are comprised of the Court and Clerk of the Superior Courts (County Clerk). The judge(s) in the Court are elected, as is the Superior Court Clerk in all but four counties. The Presiding Judge is responsible for Court operations. The Clerk's Office is an independent office, which is responsible for all documents filed for Court action. Court and Clerk operations are similar across the state, but some variance does occur due to the size of the Court and services offered by the Court or Clerk's Office

The Superior Courts can be grouped into three categories based on their number of yearly case filings:

- *Small* – Fewer than 3,000 cases filed per year; there are 21 courts in this category.
- *Medium* – Between 3,000 and 15,000 cases filed per year; there are 13 courts in this category.
- *Large* – More than 15,000 cases filed per year; there are 5 courts in this category.

System user roles within the Superior Court case management system include: Administrator, Clerk, Court Manager, Accountant, Attorney, Cashier, Detention Manager, Detention Officer, and Scheduler.

Juvenile courts process referrals involving juvenile offenders (under the age of 18) or youths who are abused or neglected. There are 33 juvenile departments supported by JUVIS / JCS / JIS.

## 7. The Courts of Limited Jurisdiction Customer

### 7.1 Who they are, what they do

Courts of Limited Jurisdiction (CLJ) include District and Municipal courts. District Courts are county courts. Municipal Courts are created by cities and towns. <sup>12</sup>

More than 2 million cases are filed annually in District and Municipal courts. Excluding parking infractions, seven out of every eight cases filed in all state courts are filed at this level. This is caused by the broad jurisdiction these courts have over traffic violations and misdemeanors.

There are 44 District Courts established by 39 counties in 56 locations. District courts filed a total of 852,926 cases in 2004. The 56 District Court locations can be grouped into three categories based on their number of yearly case filings:

- *Small* – Fewer than 3,000 cases filed per year; there are 34 courts in this category.
- *Medium* – Between 3,000 and 15,000 cases filed per year; there are 15 courts in this category.
- *Large* – More than 15,000 cases filed per year; there are 7 courts in this category.

There are 126 Municipal Courts which filed a total of 1,165,860 cases within the state (including parking infractions) in 2004.

Probation organizations play a large supporting role to the CLJ. There are currently 71 CLJ probation organizations within the state, employing 453 staff. More than 30,000 offenders are typically on probation at any given time. <sup>14</sup>

Seattle Municipal Court (SMC) stands out as a Municipal court for a number of reasons:

- SMC built and uses its own system, Municipal Court Information System (MCIS), which is an older system and has many of the same operational issues as the AOC legacy systems.
- SMC processes an immense volume of transactions. 2004 case filings totaled 583,752, in comparison to the next largest Municipal court, Tacoma Municipal which filed a total of 52,970 cases.
- SMC sends the AOC case and person data for current adjudicated criminal cases, as well as Domestic Violence cases and protection orders.

## 8. Other State Agency and Public Customers

### 8.1 Who they are, what they do

The general public; non-profit organizations, commercial businesses, local, state, and federal agencies are all interested in accessing or using information from the JIS.

## 9. The JIS Customer Tiers

The list of JIS Customer needs continues to evolve as business practices and technology changes.

County and city budget constraints are forcing fewer court staff to handle rising case loads. These challenges, along with the varying needs of other JIS Customers, make it critical that the AOC continually evaluate the range of services to support all. As we look to the future, the AOC has defined a tiered system of classification to recognize the types of needs and JIS services that will best suit the customer.

### ***Tier I*** – Full Service Tier:

The most common tier comprised of the largest customer base. Includes:

- Hardware purchases and installation
- Limited network support
- JIS system software support
- Software development
- Enhancements of court-specific programs
- User Assistance (may include system training, business process, and documentation)

### ***Tier II*** – A la carte:

- Individual courts may choose to use services, equipment and applications provided by AOC;  
and/or
- They may find alternative solutions for their technology needs.

### ***Tier III*** – Data only:

- Customers are not using any AOC application as their primary information system
- Includes:
  - Other state and federal agencies
  - Public customers who need JIS data

- 1 Washington Courts website – Information Services Division
- 2 JIS Transactions by Month for User Type Report
- 3 *A Citizen's Guide to Washington Courts*, Ninth Edition
- 4 *A Citizen's Guide to Washington Courts*, Ninth Edition
- 5 *2004 Caseloads of the Courts of Washington* – Supreme Court
- 6 *A Citizen's Guide to Washington Courts*, Ninth Edition
- 7 *2004 Caseloads of the Courts of Washington* – The Court of Appeals
- 8 *A Citizen's Guide to Washington Courts*, Ninth Edition
- 9 *2004 Caseloads of the Courts of Washington* – Superior Court
- 10 *2004 Caseloads of the Courts of Washington* – Superior Court
- 11 *Examining the Work of State Courts, 2004* – Juvenile Section. Provided by the National Center for State Courts
- 12 *A Citizen's Guide to Washington Courts*, Ninth Edition
- 13 *2004 Caseloads of the Courts of Washington* – Courts of Limited Jurisdiction
- 14 *Misdemeanant Corrections Association* – Juvenile and Corrections Integration presentation
- 15 *2004 Caseloads of the Courts of Washington* – Courts of Limited Jurisdiction