

**Board for Judicial Administration  
Biennial Report  
2018–2020**

September 15, 2020

Dear Justice System Partners,

The Board for Judicial Administration (BJA) is proud to share a summary of their work over the past two years. The BJA is charged with developing and adopting policy for and being the unified voice of the Washington State courts. The power of the judiciary to make administrative policy governing its operations is an essential element of its constitutional status as an equal branch of government.

There have been many accomplishments and changes over the past two years: the BJA has 1) reviewed their internal guiding documents through bylaw and court rules changes, committee composition, and meeting structures, and 2) increased external relationships through task forces and collaborative leadership meetings. The BJA implemented several strategic initiatives and saw successful legislative advocacy efforts and increased funding for court interpreters and online education, and successfully shepherded policy bills, court education programs and civic outreach efforts and programs. Last year the BJA said good bye to retiring chair Chief Justice Mary Fairhurst and welcomed Chief Justice Debra Stephens.

The public health crisis significantly impacted courts and at the same time provided opportunities for change. There has been increased attention to racial equity in court processes and overall access to the courts. The new BJA Court Recovery Task Force is engaging in broad conversations and work toward fair and equitable administration of justice.

The BJA looks forward to continuing to represent Washington Courts and engaging in discussions and work to advance the mission of the courts. A strong, cohesive BJA results in a strong, cohesive judiciary.

If you have any questions about this report or the work of the BJA, please contact [Jeanne.englert@courts.wa.gov](mailto:Jeanne.englert@courts.wa.gov). As co-chairs of the BJA, we welcome your feedback on how we can achieve our vision and goals.



Chief Justice Debra Stephens, Chair  
Board for Judicial Administration



Judge Gregory Gonzales, Member Chair  
Board for Judicial Administration

## Membership Rosters

### 2018-2019 Members

#### Voting Members

**Chief Justice Mary Fairhurst**, Chair  
Washington State Supreme Court

**Judge Judy Rae Jasprica**, Member Chair DMCJA  
Pierce County District Court

**Judge Doug Federspiel**, SCJA  
Yakima County Superior Court

**Judge Blaine Gibson**, President SCJA  
Yakima County Superior Court

**Judge Gregory Gonzales**, SCJA  
Clark County Superior Court

**Judge Dan Johnson**, DMCJA  
Lincoln County District Court

**Judge David Kurtz**, SCJA  
Snohomish County Superior Court

**Judge Robert Lawrence-Berrey**, COA Div. III

**Judge Linda Lee**, COA Div. II  
Court of Appeals, Division II

**Judge Mary Logan**, DMCJA  
Spokane Municipal Court

**Judge David Mann**, COA Div. I

**Judge Kevin Ringus**, DMCJA  
Fife Municipal Court

**Judge Rebecca Robertson**, President DMCJA  
Federal Way Municipal Court

**Judge Michael Scott**, SCJA  
King County Superior Court

**Justice Charles Wiggins**  
Washington State Supreme Court

#### Non-Voting Members

**Paula Littlewood**, Executive Director WSBA

**Judge Samuel Meyer**, President-Elect DMCJA  
Thurston County District Court

**William Pickett**, President WSBA

**Dawn Marie Rubio**  
State Court Administrator

**Judge Laurel Siddoway**, Presiding Chief Judge  
Court of Appeals, Division III

**Judge Kitty Ann van Doorninck**, President-Elect SCJA  
Pierce County Superior Court

### 2019-2020 Members

#### Voting Members

**Chief Justice Debra Stephens**, Chair  
Washington State Supreme Court

**Judge Gregory Gonzales**, Member Chair SCJA  
Clark County Superior Court

**Judge Tam Bui**, DMCJA  
Snohomish County District Court

**Judge Doug Federspiel**, SCJA  
Yakima County Superior Court

**Justice Steven González**  
Washington State Supreme Court

**Judge Dan Johnson**, DMCJA  
Lincoln County District Court

**Judge David Kurtz**, SCJA  
Snohomish County Superior Court

**Judge Robert Lawrence-Berrey**, COA Div. III

**Judge Linda Lee**, COA Div. II

**Judge Mary Logan**, DMCJA  
Spokane Municipal Court

**Judge David Mann**, COA Div. I

**Judge Samuel Meyer**, President DMCJA  
Thurston County District Court

**Judge Kevin Ringus**, DMCJA  
Fife Municipal Court

**Judge Michael Scott**, SCJA  
King County Superior Court

**Judge Kitty Ann van Doorninck**, President SCJA  
Pierce County Superior Court

#### Non-Voting Members

**Judge Michelle Gehlsen**, President-Elect DMCJA  
Bothell Municipal Court

**Judge J. Robert Leach**, Presiding  
Chief Judge, COA Div. III

**Rajeev Majumdar**, President WSBA

**Terra Nevitt**, Interim Executive Director WSBA

**Judge Judith Ramseyer**, President-Elect SCJA  
Pierce County Superior Court

**Dawn Marie Rubio**  
State Court Administrator

## Board Overview

The Board for Judicial Administration (BJA), established in 1981, provides leadership to develop policy and enhance the administration of justice to help strike the balance between local and institutional interests, while binding separate units of the Washington judiciary. The BJA is chaired by the Chief Justice and a member chair who rotates leadership between the superior courts and the courts of limited jurisdiction.

### The BJA accomplishes its mission through:

- 1) **Policy** - establishing a judicial position on legislation and prioritizing funding requests from the general funds.
- 2) **Communication** - improving information sharing within the judiciary to help foster the local administration of justice and enable the judiciary to speak with a unified voice.
- 3) **Resources** - engaging in resource development through the committees' work and more recently the Task Forces.

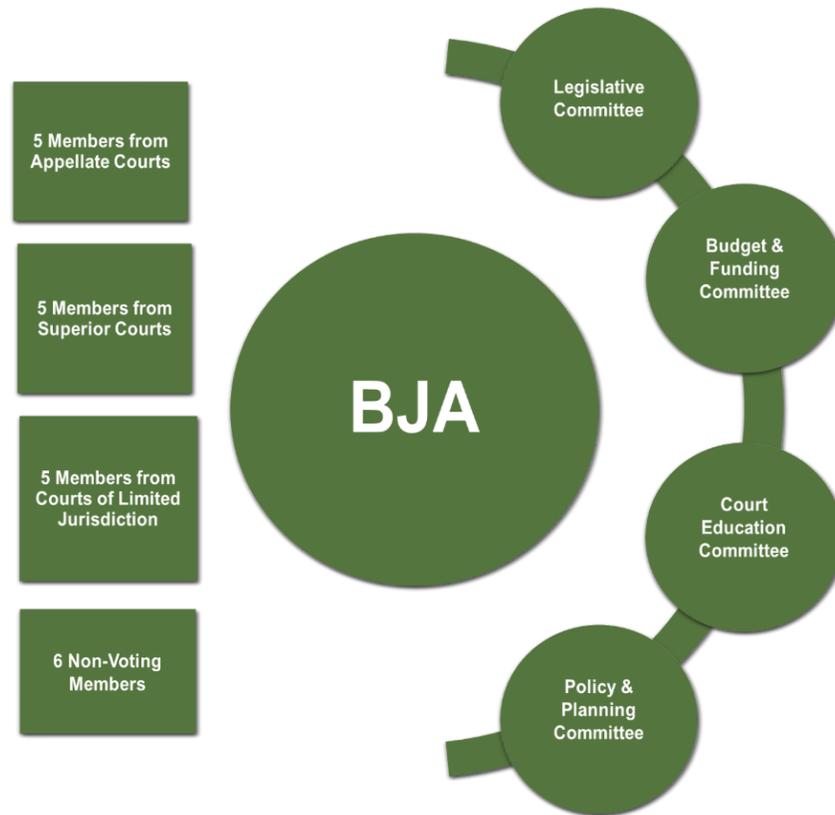
Membership for the Board for Judicial Administration consists of judges from all levels of court selected for their demonstrated interest and commitment to judicial administration and court improvement. Membership also includes several non-voting positions. Members are appointed based upon a process established by their respective associations or court level. Standing committees provide structure and focus to the work of the Board for Judicial Administration. The Administrative Office of the Courts provides coordination and staff support to each committee.

## Board Highlights

### The BJA worked on three leadership goals:

- 1) **Speak With A Unified Voice** – At the August 2019 Leadership Summit, participants identified and discussed court priorities: access to justice, adequate court funding, behavioral health impacts, and judicial decisions and turnover. The priorities were then distributed to committees for further discussion. The BJA developed and implemented a communication plan and began distributing BJA meeting snapshots after each meeting. The Task Forces developed campaign messages that were distributed to their stakeholders.
- 2) **Collaborate and Build Relationships** – The BJA continues to explore and develop ways to collaborate and build relationships both within the judicial branch and with external stakeholders. The BJA hosted presentations by Washington State Association of Counties and attorney committees addressing the impacts of COVID-19.
- 3) **Value Diversity** – The BJA facilitated discussions about racial justice and inclusiveness, and developed equity and access guiding principles for the Court Recovery Task Force. The 2020 Court Recovery Summit focused on addressing racial inequity in the justice system, with group discussion following a keynote address on institutional racism. The Policy and Planning Committee (PPC) was tasked with continuing conversations around improving BJA and committee diversity and presenting recommendations to the BJA.

## BJA Structure and Committees



\*Public Trust & Confidence is a subcommittee of Policy and Planning

The **Budget and Funding Committee (BFC)** coordinates efforts to achieve adequate, stable and long-term funding of Washington's courts and reviews and makes recommendations regarding proposed budget requests routed through the BJA.

In the past two years, the BFC provided prioritized budget recommendations to the Supreme Court Budget Committee and addressed any supplemental and biennial budget requests. They also participated in several conversations with Policy and Planning on adequate funding.

The **Court Education Committee (CEC)** promotes sound adult education policy, develops education and curriculum standards for judicial officers and court personnel, and promotes coordination in education programs for all court levels and associations.

In the past two years, the CEC developed and held the Judicial Education Leadership Institute, submitted an Education Resolution concerning adequate and sustainable funding which was adopted by the BJA, and disseminated a year-end report to the BJA and various stakeholders.

In 2019–20 the CEC held presiding judge and administrator focus groups to identify education needs. The first webinar in July, 2020, was entitled *Judicial Independence in Tough Times*, followed by a roundtable discussion in early August. The CEC also started moving forward, on several levels, to implement online education. They helped support the Court System Education Funding Task Force’s supplemental budget package and advocacy efforts for funding for online learning system and is developing a strategic plan to help guide the evolution of online education and training for the court system.

They successfully provided hours of education for the judiciary on COVID-19 via Friday Forums; conducted District and Municipal Court Managers’ Tuesday Forums to prepare for their new case management system; provided numerous Roundtable events for associations on numerous topics; developed, designed, and implemented the 2020 District and Municipal Court Judges’ Virtual Conference; designed and facilitated the Superior Court Judges’ webinars on Evictions; and more.

The **Legislative Committee (LC)** actively analyzes court impacts of all bills introduced, and directs the legislative engagement strategy regarding them each legislative system.

During the 2019 and 2020 legislative sessions, the LC successfully engaged with the legislative and executive branches to address separation of powers and the role of courts concerns in many bills, including SHB 1326 (DNA sample collection), SSB 5714 (evidence reliability/crim.), SSB 5380 (opioid use disorder), and 2E2SSB 5720 (involuntary treatment act). The LC facilitates collaborations among justice partners, court entities, and public policy makers whenever legislation has significant impacts on Washington Courts, or is requested by the BJA.

The LC successfully shepherded three BJA proposals to enactment: ESB 5450 (adding superior court judges), Part II of E2SHB 1517 (domestic violence definitions), and ESHB 1329 (Office of Public Guardianship). Following the 2020 legislative session and the ensuing pandemic outbreak, the LC convened a work group to prepare recommendations and drafts regarding continuity of judicial operations in single judge courts in event of the judge’s incapacity or extended absence from the bench.

The **Policy and Planning Committee (PPC)** creates and manages a process of engagement within the judicial branch around policy matters affecting the courts of Washington, to identify and analyze priority issues, and to develop strategies to address those issues.

Over the last two years the PPC has supported several policy related activities at the directive of the BJA. In 2018, the PPC evaluated strategic initiative proposals received from the court community and recommended that the BJA convene a Court Security Task Force. The PPC drafted the task force charter to address unmet needs for funding and resources to assist courts in complying with General Rule 36.

In 2019, the need for stable and adequate court funding was identified as the top priority at the Judicial Leadership Summit and the PPC was tasked with identifying how BJA can address this need. In 2020, the committee developed an outline of a data driven and court-user centric approach and received approval to convene an adequate funding work group with members of the PPC, the BFC and the Washington State Center for Court Research (WSCCR). The PPC supported the Judicial Leadership Summit priorities to increase efficiencies in the courts, and to research the feasibility of establishing a law clerk pool for judicial officers in smaller courts.

The **Public Trust and Confidence Subcommittee (PTC)** assesses the public's level of trust and confidence in the Washington judicial system and develops strategies to increase that trust and confidence.

In the past two years the PTC has focused on several programs:

- Implicit Bias against Religious Minorities – The PTC planned and presented a plenary session on Islamophobia at the fall 2018 judicial conference and again at the Access to Justice Conference in June 2019.
- Legislative Scholars Program – A half-day program on how the judicial branch relates to the legislative branch is presented each summer as part of a larger program presented by the State Legislature. The PTC sessions were presented on July 17, 2018, and on July 18, 2019, with sessions broadcast on TVW.
- Constitution Day – The PTC organized a major effort to celebrate Constitution Day, beginning on September 17, 2018, and repeated on September 17, 2019. Over 100 judges and attorneys were paired with schools throughout the state to make presentations on the U.S. Constitution.
- Procedural Justice Day – Resources were gathered and circulated throughout the court system.

## **BJA Strategic Initiatives**

BJA Task Forces were convened to address specific needs in the courts that are focused on developing policy and/or securing funding.

### **Interpreter Services Funding Task Force**

The BJA and Interpreter Commission created the Interpreter Services Funding Task Force in July 2017 to identify funding needs for court interpreters in Washington State. The Task Force's goals were to identify the demand for and costs of court interpreter services in Washington and to develop and implement a successful strategy to obtain adequate and sustainable state funding for interpreter services statewide. The Task Force collected broad stakeholder feedback on interpreter services across the state and submitted a budget package for the 2019 Legislative Session.

For the 2019 Legislative Session, the Interpreter Services Funding Task Force implemented a communication campaign and legislative and stakeholder outreach. Their efforts resulted in \$2.160 million budgeted for interpreter services. Because the Task Force met its goals, it was retired in October 2019.

### **Court Recovery Task Force**

On May 8, 2020, the BJA approved the creation of the Court Recovery Task Force to address court impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. The BJA Court Recovery Task Force will assess current court impacts from the pandemic; develop and implement strategies to ensure that every court can provide fair, timely, and accessible justice; and provide recommendations for ongoing court operations and recovery after the public health emergency subsides. Principles of racial equity and access to justice guide the work of the Task Force in assessing court operations.

The Task Force met in June and developed 12 committees to look at various aspects in the court system. These are: Technology Considerations, Facilities and Logistics, General Civil Litigation, Family Law, Child Welfare, Criminal Matters (Subcommittees: Juvenile Criminal Civil, Therapeutic, Adult), Appellate Courts, Lessons Learned, and Public Outreach and Communication. These committees will be expected to develop work plans identifying strategies and recommendations for improving court operations in the coming years.

### **Court Security Task Force**

The BJA created the Court Security Task Force in November 2018 to assess current court security needs and develop and implement strategies to ensure that every court in Washington has the resources needed to comply with the minimum standards of General Rule 36, Trial Court Security (GR 36) by 2025.

The Task Force conducted a security needs assessment of courts that have no or limited entry screening and developed a funding request for security equipment and resources to assist these courts in meeting the minimum standards of GR 36. A budget package was submitted for consideration in the 2021 Legislative Session. The Task Force surveyed victim advocates from across the state on their security experiences in courthouses from the court user perspective. The Task Force is currently designing a court security toolkit with reference and training materials to support courts in developing good security practices and policies consistent with the minimum standards of GR 36.

### **Court System Education Funding Task Force**

The BJA created this Task Force in July 2017 to obtain funding for court education in Washington State. The Task Force's goal was to create a strategic plan to establish adequate and sustainable funding dedicated to court system education and training. The Task Force collected stakeholder feedback on educational needs across the state, submitted a budget package for the 2019 and 2020 Legislative Session, and developed a communication campaign.

In the 2020 Legislative Session the Court System Education Funding Task Force implemented a communication campaign and legislative and stakeholder outreach. Their efforts resulted in \$207,000 budgeted for an online learning management system and staff to develop curricula. The Education Task Force continues to explore other funding options.

## **Moving Forward**

The BJA will continue working in 2020–2021 on their identified three priority areas: 1) Speak with a unified voice – The BJA speaks with a unified message and identifies ways to better tell our story as a branch; 2) Collaborate and build relationships – The BJA explores and develops ways to collaborate and build relationships both within the judicial branch and with all our justice partners; and 3) Value diversity – The BJA values diversity in its work, membership, and committees, and must work intentionally to address diversity, especially racial and ethnic diversity, through increasing membership composition and continuity and policy considerations.