Superior Courts—Judicial Needs Estimates by Full-Time Equivalents, 2011 Projected Filings[1]

Court	Judges	Authorized Unfilled Judge Positions[2]	Full-Time Commissioners	Part-Time Commissioners	Total Estimated Judge Need[3]
Adams	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Asotin/Columbia/Garfield	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.34	1.45
Benton/Franklin	6.00	0.00	2.00	0.50	10.12
Chelan	3.00	1.00	1.00	0.04	3.26
Clallam	3.00	0.00	1.00	0.19	3.63
Clark	10.00	0.00	3.00	0.60	14.12
Cowlitz	4.00	1.00	0.00	0.61	5.76
Douglas	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.09	1.23
Ferry/Stevens/Pend Oreille	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.43	2.55
Grant	3.70	0.00	0.00	0.75	3.83
Grays Harbor	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.52
Island	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	2.70
Jefferson	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.30	1.50
King	53.00	5.00	13.00	0.00	66.06
Kitsap	8.00	0.00	1.00	0.10	9.06
Kittitas	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.66
Klickitat/Skamania	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.13	1.56
Lewis	3.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	3.90
Lincoln[4]	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.13	1.13
Mason	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.88	2.56
Okanogan	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.56	2.07
Pacific/Wahkiakum	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.30
Pierce	22.00	2.00	7.00	0.00	30.83
San Juan	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.73
Skagit	4.00	0.00	1.00	0.25	6.31
Snohomish	15.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	20.85
Spokane	12.00	1.00	6.00	0.00	17.44
Thurston	8.00	0.00	2.00	0.18	10.95
Walla Walla	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.35	2.80
Whatcom	3.00	0.00	3.00	0.80	7.03
Whitman	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.20
Yakima	8.00	0.00	2.00	0.60	9.91
Total	**188.70**	**11.00**	**48.00**	**7.93**	**252.03**

1. *Year 2011 projected filings are based on the previous five-year filing trends of the various case types in a given court. Needs estimates are based on the previous five years of data for the number of total judicial officers and case resolutions.*
2. *Superior court judge positions authorized by state statute yet unfunded at the county level.*
3. *This column represents the estimated number of judge positions needed, as required by RCW 2.56.030(11). Individual counties or judicial districts may choose to establish and fund court commissioner positions instead of superior court judge positions. Identical indicators are used to measure the workload of both judges and commissioners.*
4. *The estimation process eliminates Lincoln County due to caseload anomalies which strongly influence the overall results. In order to obtain a true statewide total, the estimated judge need for Lincoln County is imputed to be identical to the current judicial officer FTE count in that county.*

Description of Superior Court Judicial Needs Estimation

In March 2001, a new methodology for estimating judicial needs in the superior courts was adopted by the Administrative Office of the Courts in conjunction with the Superior Court Judges' Association. Beginning with the 2001 Annual Report, a yearly table is published displaying court-level judicial needs estimates using this methodology, along with a brief description of the process.

The superior court model for estimating judicial needs is workload-based. The estimates are derived from a statistical model with two primary data components: (1) the observed caseload processed, and (2) the number of available judicial officers. The caseload measure is represented by case resolutions, and the judicial officer measure is represented by judge and commissioner FTEs. Any significant effects due to differences in court size are captured during the estimation process. In order to ensure that a good representative sample underlies the estimation, the data are drawn from courts across the state and from the past several years.

This type of approach has wide usage in a number of diverse applications and so provides a well-established base model. One of the inherent advantages of this methodology is the facility to capture changes in practice over time. Another advantage is that qualitative adjustments – based upon objective data – are possible. A qualitative adjustment adopted for use in the superior court model relies upon the published case-management statistics for various case types to create a "time standards adjustment factor." This adjustment allocates additional resources based upon an individual court's time-in-process results versus the case-processing time standards adopted by the Board for Judicial Administration.***** In other words, the model recognizes when a court has a case backlog problem, and takes into consideration the judicial resources needed by that court to reduce the delay in case processing. This adjustment factor is a way to introduce an *objective* quality assurance check on the baseline prediction from the input-output model.

 * *The case-processing time standards were adopted by the Board for Judicial Administration as an objective means for courts to measure the pace of cases from filing to resolution. They are published in the Washington Court Rules.*