

CIVIL PROTECTION ORDER SURVEY RESULTS

Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill (E2SHB) 1320, Sections 12, 16 and 36, directed the Washington State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission, with the support of the Washington State Women’s Commission, and in collaboration with other stakeholders, to develop recommendations to the to the legislature and courts on a variety of civil protection order issues.

The following survey of court personnel and judicial officers was drafted and administered by the stakeholder group to understand key features of data collection and work processes related to civil protection orders in courts across Washington State in order to inform the development of *“best practices in data collection and sharing [for the courts], including demographic information, in order to promote research and study on protection orders and transparency of protection order data for the public....”*

Emails with the survey link were sent to Court Administrators, Clerks, and Judicial Officers from superior courts and courts of limited jurisdiction across Washington State, and recipients were encouraged to circulate the survey widely to staff in their courts. An initial email was sent on March 15, 2022, inviting individuals to participate in the survey, with responses due by March 29, 2022. One reminder email was sent on March 23, 2022.

Below is the description given to participants about the survey:

Protection Order Research and Information Sharing Survey

The purpose of this survey is to better understand the existing infrastructure for civil protection orders, including case processing, information-sharing, data entry, and data collection. The information obtained from this survey will help inform recommendations to the court on best practices for research and data collection as required by HB 1320. This survey is also intended to identify any potential gaps or areas where processes can be improved. Your feedback is critically important. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete.

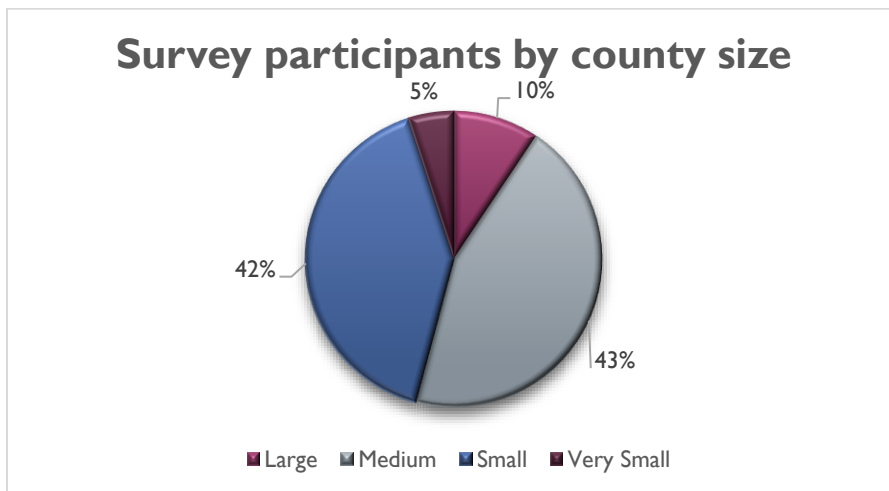
SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR SURVEY PARTICIPANTS:

Overall, 242 people from 37 counties in Washington completed the survey. All counties except Garfield (pop. = 2,300) and Skamania (pop. = 11,750) were represented. The highest representation was from King ($n = 24$; 10%), Spokane ($n = 21$; 9%), and Clark ($n = 16$; 7%) counties. Participant numbers per county ranged from 1 to 24 people.

We also looked at the percentage of participants by population size of county: Large (>1 million), medium (100,000 to 999,999), small (<100,000), and very small (<10,000). The counties by size are as follows:

- **Large** – King
- **Medium** – Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, Clark, Thurston, Kitsap, Yakima, Whatcom, Benton, Skagit, Cowlitz
- **Small** – Grant, Franklin, Island, Lewis, Chelan, Clallam, Grays Harbor, Mason, Walla Walla, Whitman, Kittitas, Stevens, Douglas, Okanogan, Jefferson, Asotin, Pacific, Klickitat, Adams, San Juan, Pend Oreille, *Skamania, Lincoln
- **Very small** – Ferry, Wahkiakum, Columbia, *Garfield

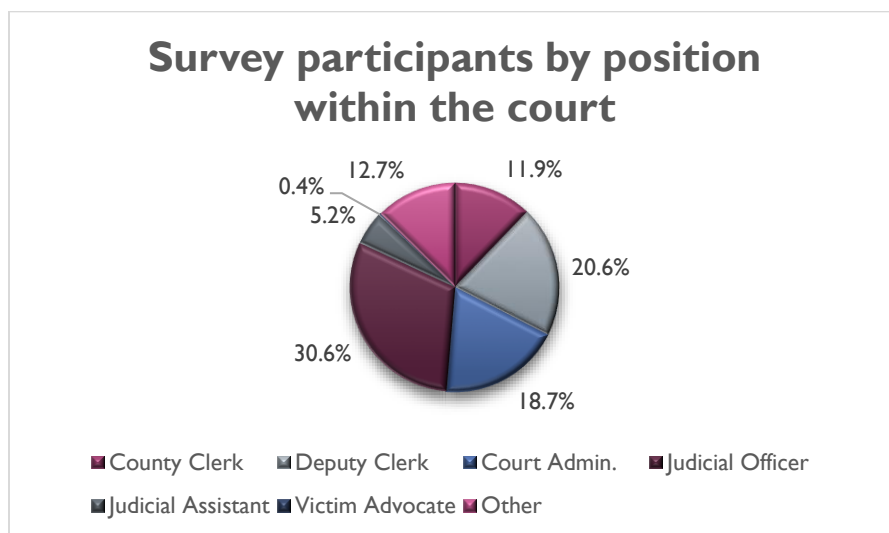
*County not represented in the survey



While the overall sample size was n = 242, across questions there were participants who skipped/did not answer. The 'sample size' (n =) for each question or group is indicated in the surrounding narrative. Results reflect the percentage among those who answered the question, and when indicated, among those within a particular group that answered the question.

PRIMARY ROLE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS:

Participants were asked what position best represented their primary role in the court with options including: County Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Court Admin, Judicial Officer, Judicial Assistant, Victim Advocate, and Other (specify) (n = 242).



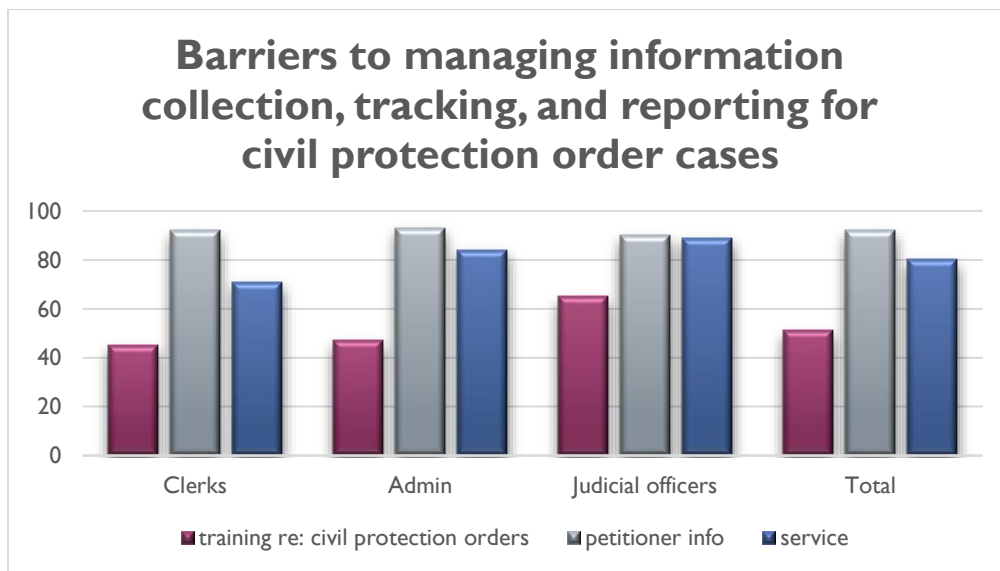
The remainder of survey results use three categories for position: **Clerk** (n = 90), **Admin** (n = 74), and **Judicial Officer** (n = 78). Clerk includes County and Deputy Clerk, Admin includes Court Admin, Judicial Assistant, and Victim Advocate, and descriptions of Other (specify) were reviewed and assigned to one of the three categories.

IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES TO COLLECTING, TRACKING, AND REPORTING INFORMATION:

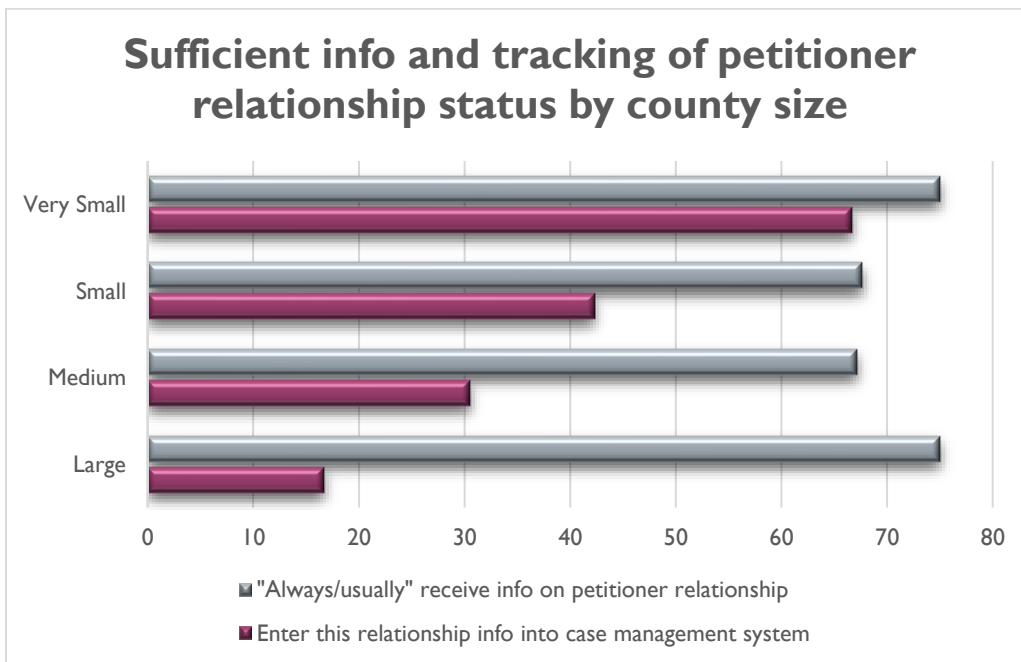
The main challenges with collecting, tracking, and reporting civil protection order information were lack of training, lack of adequate petitioner information, and issues related to the service of protection orders.

To gauge barriers to the civil protection order process, the survey asked about the degree to which various issues presented a problem for participants when ‘collecting, tracking, and reporting’ information. The top three challenges identified by survey respondents were: lack of training regarding civil protection orders, lack of adequate petitioner information, and issues related to the service of orders. Administrative participants also identified inadequate staffing as a significant challenge (61%, n = 57). The total number of survey respondents who answered these questions relating to barriers were between 177 and 193, depending on the question (Clerks n = 73 – 75; Admin n = 53 – 57; Judicial Officers n = 51 – 62). Of those who answered the question about whether service was an issue (n = 192), 100% of participants from King County, 85% from medium sized counties, 75% from small counties, and 45% from very small counties said ‘yes’.

The following graph represents the percentage of survey respondents within each group (Clerks, Admin, Judicial Officers, and Total) who responded that the issue ‘somewhat’, ‘a little’, or ‘very much’ made managing civil protection order cases difficult for them. Also included are those who indicated the issue’s impact was outside of their direct role, but they generally saw it as a problem in their court.

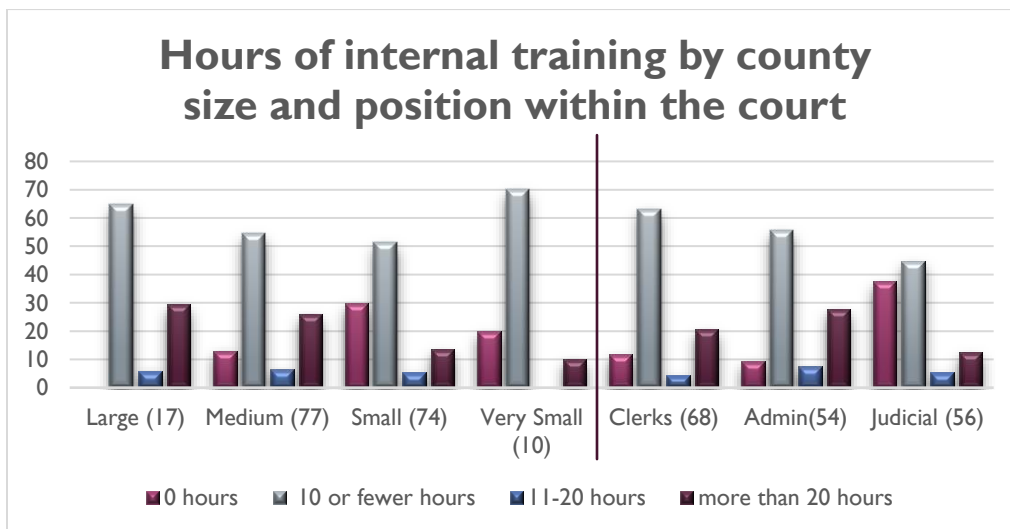


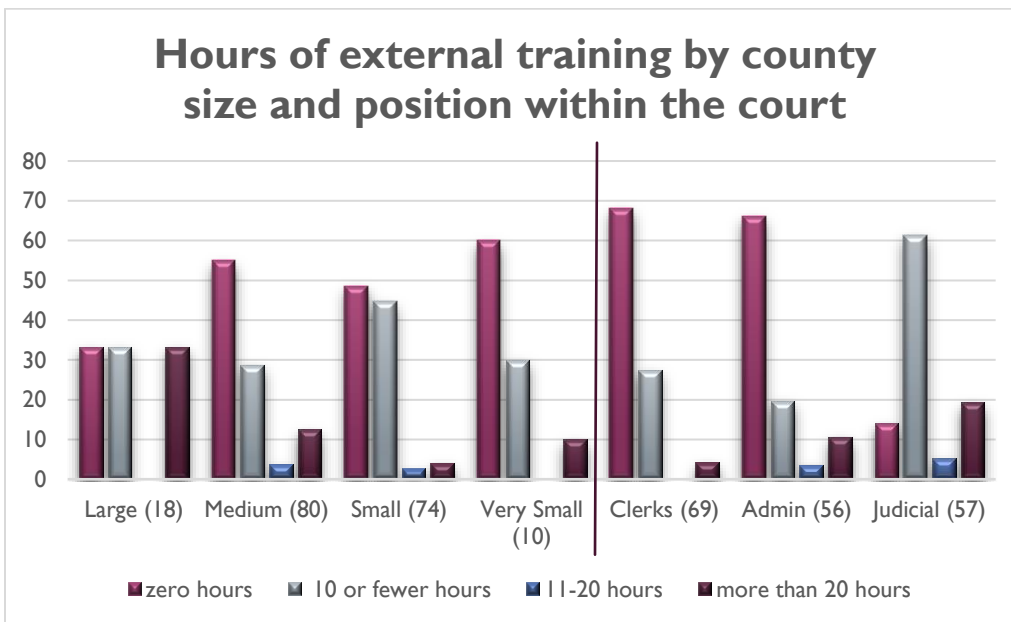
Understanding the relationship between petitioner and respondent is important for distinguishing between types of civil protection order cases (e.g., domestic violence versus harassment). Participants were asked how often they received this information in civil protection order cases, and when known, whether they entered relationship information into their case management systems. The following graph shows this information by county size (‘always/usually’ receive information (n = 191), information entered (n = 190)).



TRAINING:

As training is often a component of implementing policy and practice changes, we asked participants how many hours of training on civil protection orders they had received. The below graphs represent internal training on civil protection orders (including onboarding) and civil protection order training provided by outside entities such as the Washington Administrative Office of the Courts and local domestic violence agencies. Graphs reflect the percentage of individuals within each group who endorsed each of the ranges of training hours. Groups include position within the court and county size. Percentages are out of those who answered the question and group sample sizes are in parentheses in the graphs.

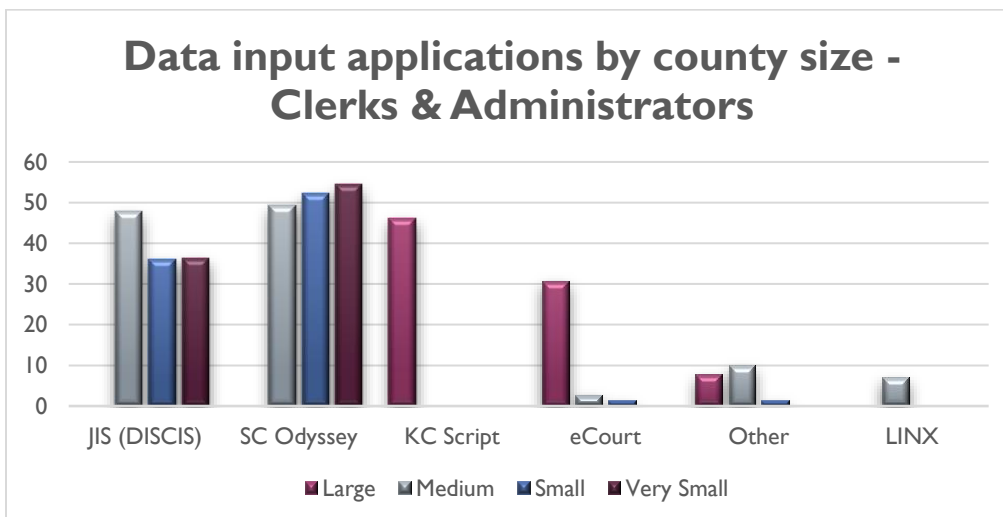


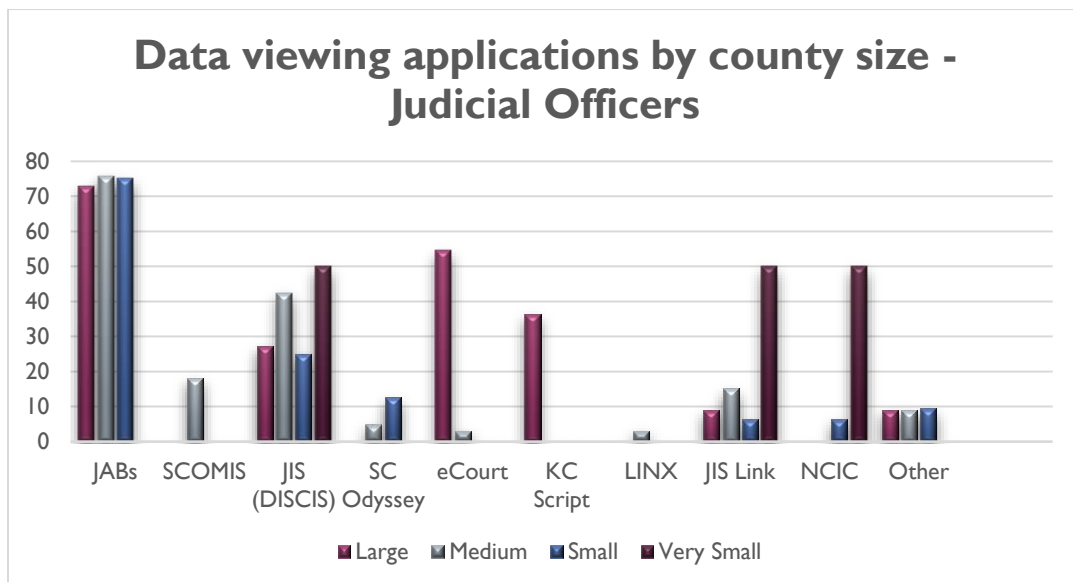
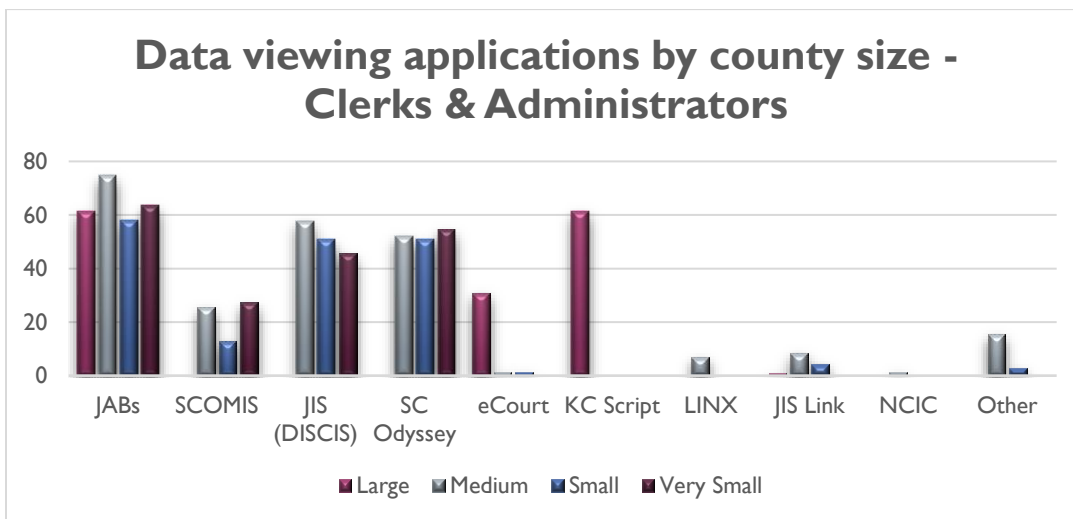


CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS & APPLICATIONS:

There is no single data management system used to enter or view civil protection order data statewide, and some courts must enter the same data into more than one system.

The workgroup was aware that jurisdictions used a variety of case management systems and other data input and viewing applications to track various aspects of the civil protection order process. The use of different applications impacts whether and how common data points are or can be collected and accessed. Therefore, we were interested in understanding the differences and commonalities regarding applications used across the state. The following graphs display the most common data input and data viewing applications used by county size. The first two graphs are answers among Clerk and Admin positions (n = 164), and the third is among Judicial officers (n = 78). Graphs reflect the percentage of individuals in each county size group who endorsed using a particular application.





ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS:

Fewer than half of counties across Washington state had participants who indicated that their court accepted electronic submissions.

The utilization of electronic form submission for civil protection order petitions has implications for promoting equal access to justice, increasing judicial economy, and easing workloads for court staff. Therefore, we were interested in participant reports of whether petitions are accepted electronically in their court. This question was a ‘select if it applies’ and nearly a quarter of the sample (23.6%; n = 57) endorsed electronic submission among a range of submission types. Fewer than half (40.5%; n = 15) of the counties represented in this survey (n = 37) had participants who endorsed that

their court accepted electronic submissions. Among these 15 counties were King (the only large county), 8 medium-sized counties, and 6 small counties.

LIMITATIONS:

The information in this summary should be viewed in light of the limitations of this study. All but two Washington counties had at least one individual who participated in this survey; however, participants are not representative of all counties, courts, or positions within the court. Some jurisdictions had a number of individuals across a variety of positions answer the survey and some had just one individual. It is possible that those who self-selected into the survey are significantly different in terms of their experience and perspective, from those who chose not to answer.

