



STATE OF THE JUDICIARY

2023



 WASHINGTON
COURTS

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CHIEF JUSTICE STEVEN C. GONZÁLEZ
WASHINGTON SUPREME COURT

STATE OF THE JUDICIARY

JUDICIAL BRANCH IS LEARNING FROM ADVERSITY AND FORGING A MORE ACCESSIBLE, EQUITABLE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

Governor Inslee, members of the State Legislature, elected officials, judicial officers, and fellow Washington residents:

I am honored to report to you on the state of Washington’s judicial branch. The judicial branch has worked hard to recover from the pandemic, to improve access to justice, and to understand and eliminate barriers based on race and gender throughout the justice system.

I also want to draw attention to important initiatives to improve jury diversity and to expand the data available to courts to allow us to test whether our efforts to improve equity and efficiency are working.

Everyone has worked through incredible challenges during the pandemic. The courts were not spared. It was enormously difficult to maintain access to justice during the demands of the pandemic. Everything slowed down. Courts across the state have enormous backlogs. Justice delayed is all too often justice denied.

We will catch up, we will continue to learn, and we will continue to progress.

I am grateful for the dedicated efforts of court leaders and staff members, for our partnerships with local government and community leaders, and our partnerships with state lawmakers who have passed innovative legislation and established innovative programs. One example of this partnership is the new Interbranch Advisory Committee which provides a forum for leaders of the judicial, legislative and executive branches to meet and explore issues that need input from all three branches.

“From Crisis Comes Opportunity”

Many of these efforts are catalogued in this written report. I would like to highlight several of them:



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An overview of judicial branch recovery, innovation and plans for embracing effective change can be found in the final report of the Board for Judicial Administration's (BJA) [Court Recovery Task Force](#) (see Page 9). The report details the unprecedented expansion of remote video technology in court proceedings that provided safe access to justice, and revealed how difficult accessing courts can be for many people even outside of a pandemic. Working on severe access issues also highlighted for the Task Force how often access, treatment and outcomes are affected by poverty, race, and ethnicity in our justice system, and that became a focus of the report as well.

The Task Force report authors affirmed that we commit to using the lessons we have learned to forge a better and more just system, and that “as usual, from crisis comes opportunity.”

Some of this commitment can be found in a recent Order of the Supreme Court that ends most emergency rules for court operations during the pandemic, but retains a number of provisions for remote hearings, electronic signatures and more because of their positive effect on justice. Another example of a statewide change forged from the pandemic response is a new court rule allowing [Informal Domestic Relations Trials](#), which have improved processes for families coming to court.

You can find inspiring individual examples of judicial branch work to solve problems and improve justice in the BJA's 2022 Innovating Justice Awards (see Page 32). The branch honored judicial officers, attorneys and individuals who worked to help thousands of people burdened with court debt they can't pay — which disproportionately affects racial and ethnic minorities and people in poverty — and to institute cutting-edge eviction defense programs as well as a new training program on explicit and implicit bias in the courtroom.

One of the four awards recognized establishment of a new Indian Child Welfare Court Act in Clallam County, one of only 20 in the nation. The unique court was established in partnership with the county's five local tribes (see Page 48).

Equity Lens and a Stunning Fact

As these efforts show, our branch is strongly committed to ensuring that our initiatives, projects, programs and research are planned and conducted with an equity lens — making sure to consider the disparate

I want to express my sincere gratitude to state and local lawmakers who have worked with the judicial branch and with local courts over these difficult times to keep justice available, and to help us enact solutions that may extend well beyond the pandemic years.

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treatment of and outcomes for racial and ethnic minorities throughout the justice system, and how new efforts can either exacerbate those barriers or work to eliminate those disparities.

We learned a great deal from the [Task Force 2.0 presentation](#) to the Supreme Court in July 2022 detailing specific recommendations in 14 areas to address this racial disparity (see Page 19). The Task Force was launched by the deans of Washington's three law schools following the death of George Floyd, nationwide protests for racial justice, and a June 4, 2020, Open Letter written by justices of our state Supreme Court challenging members of the judiciary and legal community to recognize racial injustice and take steps to eliminate it.

Another illuminating presentation came June 1, 2022, from the Washington Supreme Court Minority and Justice Commission, exploring how reparations for Black Americans can begin to counteract the ongoing harmful legacy of slavery and the decades of anti-Black discrimination that have followed (see Page 17).

We also continue to learn from the expansive, deeply detailed study by the Gender and Justice Commission released in late 2021 about the impacts of gender and race combined on justice (see Page 11). For instance, the study revealed the stunning fact that women of color in Washington, particularly Black and Indigenous women, are convicted and sentenced to incarceration at rates two to eight times higher than are white women.

This demonstrates why it is so important for our branch to continually look at the data, and to keep searching for causes and solutions. One finding of the study highlighted the lack of minority women on juries.

Proposals to Increase Jury Diversity and Data

This leads me to our legislative proposals this coming year to fund programs aimed at increasing jury diversity and improving data that can guide our efforts to build a more just and equitable court system.

Studies have shown that racially diverse juries spend more time deliberating, make fewer errors, and result in fairer trials than non-diverse juries. Our proposal would continue a 2021 Jury Demographic Survey, would establish pilot projects to explore if free childcare or increased juror pay would improve diverse response rates, and would allow courts to email jury summons in addition to sending them to physical addresses.

Our Data for Justice Initiative would expand research capabilities at the Washington State Center for Court Research within the Administrative Office of the Courts, which would support courts in collecting and analyzing data, reporting performance measures, and provide training in using data for implementing equitable change.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to state and local lawmakers who have worked with the judicial branch and with local courts over these difficult times to keep justice available, and to help us enact solutions that may extend well beyond the pandemic years.

And I want to express my deep appreciation for the members of Washington's court community, who have worked with dedication and creativity to fulfill our branch's promise that equal justice under the law will always be provided regardless of the challenges that arise.



PANDEMIC ADAPTATIONS REVEAL PATH TO MORE ACCESSIBLE COURT SYSTEM OF THE FUTURE

Washington courts proved during the pandemic that they can adapt quickly to new technologies and methods when the need is urgent, and in doing so, they learned a lot about building a more accessible and responsive court system.

That was a key conclusion of the Board for Judicial Administration's (BJA) Court Recovery Task Force, which issued its final report in July 2022 after two years of work coordinating emergency actions to keep courts operating safely and gathering information on impacts and innovations.

The report, "Re-imagining Our Courts: Pandemic Response and Recovery Lead Courts Into the Future," compiles the information gathered, the lessons learned, and the task force's recommendations to the judicial branch on how to maintain the responsiveness and expanded access the branch forged out of necessity.

"We commit to not going back to business as usual, but instead to incorporate the important lessons we learned together," wrote Washington Supreme Court Chief Justice Steven González in the report. Justice González served as co-chair of the Task Force with King County Superior Court Judge Judith Ramseier and Olympia Municipal Court Judge Scott Ahlf.

Some common changes adopted during the pandemic included expanded electronic filing and use of electronic signatures, extensive use of remote video technology to conduct proceedings rather than requiring participants to appear in person, adjusting procedures to allow attorneys

to take more actions for their clients, providing access to technology for those who lacked it, and much more.

The Task Force was convened in May 2020 by then-Chief Justice Debra Stephens. Shortly after this, a racial justice movement surged nationwide in response to the killing of George Floyd, and Task Force members agreed that a racial justice lens should be used in considering responses and innovations.

"We used our experiences to overcome the daunting challenges we faced," wrote the Task Force co-chairs. "Thankfully, this process also informed a blueprint for our courts to keep evolving into the most efficient, respectful, and just legal system we can become. As usual, from crisis comes opportunity."

The Task Force recommended that courts of the future:

- Embrace positive change;
- Collaborate more with justice partners and local leaders;
- Use technology to promote access and efficiency;
- Gather feedback from court users on a regular basis and use it to adapt; and
- Implement new practices using a racial justice lens.

"The tragedy, fear, and enormous challenges confronted and overcome during the COVID-19 pandemic have created a dynamic environment that — at least momentarily — has loosened the bonds of inertia," wrote the report authors. "Momentum should not be lost... We are positioned to achieve a re-imagined court system that more fully and fairly delivers on our mandate to provide justice for all."

"We commit to not going back to business as usual, but instead to incorporate the important lessons we learned together."

CHIEF JUSTICE STEVEN GONZÁLEZ
WASHINGTON SUPREME COURT, COURT RECOVERY TASK FORCE CO-CHAIR

2021: HOW GENDER AND RACE AFFECT JUSTICE NOW



GENDER AND JUSTICE COMMISSION

Promoting Gender Equality
in the Justice System



Final Report

GENDER AND JUSTICE STUDY REVEALS NEW VOICES OF DISPARITY AND STRUGGLE, PLUS DATA TO GUIDE SOLUTIONS

The Washington Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission (GJC) in late 2021 released a wide-ranging, deeply detailed study of how gender affects justice for individuals, both their trajectory through the justice system and their outcomes.

The Study finds that gender clearly impacts many aspects of the justice system, but researchers worked to dig deeply into the details. The impacts became particularly telling when findings focused on sub-categories of gender where it combines with race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, income and immigration status, as the new GJC Study does.

“We really wanted hard facts, scientific data, and a view of what it’s like on the ground. How many women are in prison? How many Black women are in prison? Let’s disaggregate by race and ethnicity because if we just talk about the majority of women, who in Washington are white, we are not getting a comprehensive picture of women,” said Washington Supreme Court Justice Sheryl Gordon McCloud, co-chair of the GJC and co-chair of the Study, [in an interview](#) for the Washington State Bar Association magazine, *Bar News*.

“We were looking for strong data for a detailed report, so that anyone could learn from it and rely on the information in each of the topics studied,” Gordon McCloud said. “The better the data, the better chance that people can name the problem and then build solutions.”

Gender and Justice Study: A Quick Overview or Deep Dive

“Based on the data in which we have a high degree of confidence, two points stand out: (1) gender matters — it does affect the treatment of court users (including litigants, lawyers, witnesses, jurors, and employees); and (2) the adverse impact of these gendered effects is most pronounced for Black, Indigenous, other women of color, LGBTQ+ people, and women in poverty.”

Executive Summary of the 2021 Gender and Justice Study, “How Gender and Race Affect Justice Now”

Though the 2021 Study is wide-ranging and deeply detailed, readers can scan its contents as quickly or extensively as they prefer with:

- A three-page [Fact Sheet](#) which highlights broad findings and recommendations.
- A designed [web overview](#) with highlights and links.



www.courts.wa.gov/genderjustice



GENDER AND JUSTICE STUDY CONTINUED

- A 90-page [Executive Summary](#) with short chapters written by many current and retired judicial officers, attorneys and subject matter experts; provides comprehensive overview and important details and recommendations.
- A [Pilot Projects](#) web page with links to all five research reports focusing on:
 - Washington State Courts Workplace Harassment Survey
 - Evaluation of Washington State Domestic Violence Moral Reconciliation Therapy (DV-MRT) Programs, Processes and Outcomes
 - Incarceration of Women in Washington State: Multi-Year Analysis of Felony Data
 - Evaluation: On-Site Childcare Programs in County Courthouses and Their Effect on Access to the Justice System
 - Jury Diversity: A Survey of Washington State Trial Courts – Analysis of Court Demographic Data Collection and Juror Accommodations

The full 1183-page Study report, “2021: How Gender and Race Affect Justice Now,” provides a deep dive into the research areas with longer chapters, more charts and extensive detail on how the research was conducted, how pilot projects were chosen, how recommendations were reached, and more.

A 1989 study of gender disparities in justice in Washington — also a nationally ground-breaking report — inspired establishment of the GJC. Now the new GJC Study tells the complicated story of gender impacts in the justice system of the 2020s.

This 2021 Study unearthed unexpected data on incarceration of Washington women of color that is growing “in the shadows.” It also provides detail about sexual exploitation of LGBTQ+ youth, notes unintended consequences in domestic violence arrest laws, highlights litigant barriers in coming to court, examines jury participation rates for women of color, and much more.

“We have a lot of very important new information, thanks to our dedicated staff and to hundreds of volunteers who worked thousands of hours on this project,” said Dr. Dana Raigrodski, University of Washington School of Law professor and director, who served as co-chair for the Study. The co-chairs laud the Study as an effort to lift the accessibility and quality of justice in Washington for all women.

“We were looking for strong data for a detailed report, so that anyone could learn from it and rely on the information in each of the topics studied. The better the data, the better chance that people can name the problem and then build solutions.”

JUSTICE SHERYL GORDON MCCLOUD
WASHINGTON SUPREME COURT, GENDER AND JUSTICE COMMISSION CO-CHAIR



GENDER AND JUSTICE COMMISSION PILOT PROJECT FINDS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TREATMENT IS LOW COST AND EFFECTIVE

It was 2015 and Tukwila Municipal Court Presiding Judge Kim Walden was concerned. Too many domestic violence offenders ordered to undergo treatment by the court were failing to comply — primarily because they could not afford the treatment.

This was setting convicted offenders up to fail, says Tukwila Municipal Court Administrator Trish Kinlow. “Ordering a person to comply with a condition that they cannot financially afford actually works against the individual, and negatively impacts the public’s trust and confidence in the judicial system.”

Judge Walden asked court staff to look for affordable treatment options, and Court Support Services Manager Mindy Breiner found Domestic Violence Moral Reconciliation Therapy (DV-MRT). Then the staff “discussed the idea of bringing the training in-house and making it affordable, including allowing a person to make reasonable payments to pay for the classes,” Kinlow said.

Several years and a Pilot Research Project later, court staff and treatment facilitators have found DV-MRT is not just more affordable and more manageable for participants — helping them escape one barrier — it is equally or more effective at reducing recidivism than more expensive alternative treatments, and it is well-received by participants.

“It’s a little cliché, but I have heard many students say that the DV-MRT program changed their life and they’ve become a better person from it. The program shed light on their abusive behaviors, and they learned why they react/respond the way they do,” said one facilitator. “I’ve heard that it should be taught in college as a required course because it is not just about domestic violence but teaches you good decision-making skills and how to ‘adult.’”

The Washington Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission (GJC) is working to raise awareness of its unique research into this promising, low-cost treatment program for domestic violence offenders, one of the first

studies in the nation to evaluate the effectiveness of this therapy in the context of domestic violence.

“Moral reconnection” refers to moral reasoning and conscious decision-making that lead to better choices and behaviors.

The evaluation was conducted by researchers at Washington State University. It is a pilot project of the GJC’s ground-breaking, 3-year study released in 2021 on how gender impacts justice in Washington, particularly when linked with race and ethnicity.

GJC chose to evaluate DV-MRT because there was a lack of rigorous research into the treatment’s effectiveness, and it is important information for courts and judicial officers. The GJC’s research found that, in the year following treatment, DV-MRT participants had a significantly lower rate of reconviction for a domestic violence offense than the comparison group. The research showed that DV-MRT became less effective in the second year, though the treatment group still showed better outcomes than the comparison group.

Researchers collected data and information from six courts using DV-MRT for the evaluation — Des Moines Municipal Court, Edmonds Municipal Court, Everett Municipal Court, Snohomish District Court, Tukwila Municipal Court and Bellevue Municipal Court. The program is used by 51 Washington courts in 12 counties.

DV-MRT can be conducted at a fraction of the cost of other domestic violence treatment programs, which can be \$50–\$100 per session. The cost of the full six-month DV-MRT program is \$100–\$200. As a result, the program can significantly improve sentencing options for judicial officers and improve access for individuals.

“The GJC is grateful to the district and municipal courts who chose to initiate these programs and who participated in our pilot project,” said Kitsap County District Court Judge Marilyn Paja, co-chair of the Commission. “We are hopeful more courts will consider DV-MRT, and this will prompt additional study.”



“THE PAST IS NOT PAST”: REPARATIONS CAN BRING ACCOUNTABILITY AND REMEDIES FOR ONGOING HARM OF SLAVERY AND DISCRIMINATION

Two slides pictured large gatherings of hooded KKK members in Seattle and Tacoma in the 1920s. Other slides quoted Washington neighborhood housing covenants that banned sales to Black persons, starting in the early 1900s in Seattle and sweeping across the state over the next decades. One slide pictured a respected, well-off Black family in Seattle that was forced to sell their home and move.

Other slides showed historic and current racial gaps in employment, income, education and severe disparities in incarceration — which has impacts that last for generations. Another slide quoted a decision of the 1961 Washington Supreme Court that negated a housing fairness law passed by state lawmakers, saying that no homeowner could be compelled to sell to another person for any reason.

The presentation was being made to the current justices of the state Supreme Court by University of Washington Professor Quintard Taylor. “This came from your predecessors,” Taylor told the justices of the 1961 decision that supported racial discrimination in housing. “None of us is free from the consequences.”

Professor Taylor was one of many speakers and panelists who presented the 2022 Minority and Justice Commission Symposium to the justices of the Court on June 1, exploring the issue of reparations to African Americans to begin to remedy the ongoing, harmful legacy of slavery and discrimination.

Speakers and panel members discussed the long history of efforts to enact reparations, such as early attempts to secure pensions and land for former slaves; explored the wide ranging actions that could constitute reparations, beyond monetary payments; explained why reparations are needed for healing communities and the country; and provided a history of anti-Black discrimination in Washington state and its ongoing impacts.

“A major part of reparations is accountability,” said

Professor Eric Miller of Loyola Law School. “That is why they are so needed and powerful. Reparations are those remedies necessary to account for and compensate victims of significant, inter-generational, race-targeted wrong.”

Similar to reparations made to Japanese Americans interned during World War II, reparations can include monetary payments, monuments that memorialize a wrong rather than attempts to suppress it, changes in law such as removing statutes of limitations for taking civil action when civil action was not available at the time, and more.

“The past is not past,” Miller said. “History is still present and it structures our relationships in society today.”

“Deep racial disparities in American society today can be traced back to slavery and an unbroken chain of racial discrimination,” said Professor Adjoa Aiyetoro of the William H. Bowen School of Law, who provided a history of attempts to enact reparations. The attempts have never succeeded.

“Disparities throughout society are a direct legacy of slavery,” she said. Reparations are about dismantling that chain of discrimination and harm.

The 2022 symposium was the 10th annual presentation to the Supreme Court exploring an issue of racial justice in depth, inviting experts, scholars and activists from across the country and across Washington to provide insight and recommendations.

“This event is very important to us,” said Chief Justice Stephen González, when welcoming participants and speakers. “Today is a day our court community commits itself to learning about racial injustice in our legal system.”

The symposium was presented over Zoom and was recorded by TVW. Materials, links to scholarly articles and resources, and speaker biographies are available in the Minority and Justice Commission’s [benchbook for the 2022 symposium](#).




REPARATIONS FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS

6/1/22

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FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.COURTS.WA.GOV
WASHINGTON STATE MINORITY AND JUSTICE COMMISSION





TASK FORCE 2.0 PRESENTS RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE RACIAL DISPARITY

A task force of the [Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality](#) at the Seattle University School of Law presented [recommendations](#) to the Washington Supreme Court in July 2022 on reducing and, where possible, eliminating racial disparities in Washington’s criminal and juvenile justice systems.

The [recommendations report](#) and presentation focused on 14 areas of criminal and civil justice which were revealed in a 2021 [research report](#) by the Task Force to exhibit strong racial disproportionality. The 2022 recommendations report provides numerous specific recommendations in each of the areas, designed to address actions and processes that have historically resulted in racial disparities in the justice system. The 14 areas include:

- Policing and Traffic Stops
- Alternatives to Policing
- Pre-filing Decisions
- Prosecutorial Decision-Making
- Pretrial Release
- Prisons and Sentencing
- Jails
- Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs)
- Driving with License Suspended 3 (DWLS 3)
- Community Supervision and Reentry
- Data Justice
- Asset Forfeiture
- Public Defense
- Language Access

The recommendations are accompanied by a number of “Minority Reports” — alternative views or details expressed by such entities as the King County Prosecutor’s Office. Additional recommendations for [reforming the juvenile justice system](#) were presented by a special sub-committee. The public presentation of the justices of the Court was [livestreamed](#) and recorded by TVW.

“The work of Task Force 1.0 and 2.0 builds on decades of work of the Minority and Justice Commission, which carries forward the work of the legislatively-created Minority and Justice Task Force that issued its path breaking 1990 Final Report,” wrote the report authors.

Task Force 2.0 was launched in mid-2020 by the deans of Washington’s three law schools following the death of George Floyd, nationwide protests for racial justice, and a June 4, 2020, [Open Letter](#) written by justices of the Washington Supreme Court challenging members of the state judiciary and legal community to recognize racial injustice and take steps to eliminate it.



**Race and Washington’s Criminal Justice System:
2022 Recommendations to Criminal Justice Stakeholders in Washington**



COURTS RECEIVE HELP FROM LAWMAKERS: NEW JUDICIAL BRANCH SUPPORT PROGRAMS HAVE “LONG BEEN NEEDED”

To our knowledge, no state has done anything like this on this level,” Sharon Swanson said as she tried to describe the work facing the new Blake Team within the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), where she serves as Blake Implementation Manager. The team will be responsible for helping Washington courts respond to the sweeping impacts of the 2021 *State v. Blake* decision of the state Supreme Court, which held Washington’s felony drug possession law to be unconstitutional.

The finding was held to be retroactive and has implications back to the early 1970s. This left tens of thousands of convictions eligible to be vacated, sentences to be adjusted for thousands of currently incarcerated or supervised persons, and fines and court fees eligible to be reimbursed.

And left many questions about how to accomplish it all.

State lawmakers provided \$47 million in 2022 to begin the work, with coordination and support provided by AOC’s *Blake* Team. The Team will establish a Refund Bureau that will oversee fine and fee reimbursements; develop a list of convictions, going back decades, that qualify for relief; turn that list into a searchable database for use by the public and make sure the information is secure; work with each county and more than 100 courts, as well as justice partners across all branches.

“We still don’t know all the implications,” said Swanson, who before joining the *Blake* Team had worked as a deputy prosecutor, a staff attorney with the state Senate, and a government relations specialist with the Association of Washington Cities. “We will need to be patient with each other because this is all new.”

“New” is something of a theme for the growing number of programs aimed at helping courts take on challenging efforts such as responding to the *Blake* decision, responding to new protection order requirements by state lawmakers, enhancing successful programs such as therapeutic courts (drug courts, veterans courts, family courts), filling expanding needs for public guardians and interpreters, and much more. Most of these new or expanded support programs are based at AOC.

“This has been an unprecedented increase in funding for the judicial branch that has long been needed,” said Chris Stanley, AOC’s Chief Financial and Management Officer. “We appreciate the investment the Legislature has made in our branch.”

JUDICIAL BRANCH PROGRAMS CONTINUED

New or expanded programs and services for courts at AOC include:

Blake Team

The *Blake* Team will work on many fronts to build the resources and capacity to meet the needs created by the *Blake* decision, which may affect more than 100,000 convictions. An immediate need is setting up reimbursements for courts already experiencing costs in vacating convictions or already issuing LFO (fine and fee) reimbursements.

In the meantime, the Team will establish a Refund Bureau expected to be operational by July 2023, where individuals can come directly for reimbursement. The team will develop a list of convictions and persons eligible for relief and create a searchable, secure database that can be used by the public to find out if they have cases affected by the decision. “We don’t want it to be difficult for people to find this information,” Swanson said.

The Team must hire a “scheduling referee” to work with the state Department of Corrections, courts, prosecutors, defense attorneys and the estimated 3,000–5,000 individuals who are currently incarcerated or under state supervision who may qualify for sentencing relief. AOC’s *Blake* Team will include coordinators assigned to work directly with courts, fiscal, contract and data specialists, and eventually an outreach specialist. A website will be developed as a central information location.

Family and Youth Justice Programs

This new office evolved from AOC’s Court Improvement Program, which utilizes federal grant funding for data, training and technical assistance to improve timelines and outcomes for dependency court cases heard in Washington superior courts. The expanded Family & Youth Justice Programs (FYJP) now includes the broader mission of improving systems to support thriving families and equitable court communities.

The FYJP collaborates with agencies such as the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), the Office of Public Defense, the Washington Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care and a variety of community groups and people with lived expertise in the child welfare court system. FYJP programs and services for dependency courts include:

The new Family Treatment Court Program (more on that next);

- The Early Childhood Court Program, funded by state lawmakers in 2021 to support court teams serving families with children birth to three;
- Numerous training programs, academies and events for judicial officers, attorneys and court partners, such as online training modules, annual dependency judicial training, Reasonable and Active Efforts Academies, Safety Summits, an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Court summit, a Rural Treatment Court Roundtable, and much more;
- A new Judicial Community of Practice (JCoP) for dependency court judicial officers, where peers can

JUDICIAL BRANCH PROGRAMS CONTINUED

connect to share questions, ideas and experiences, and the Jurist in Residence program that brings in experienced, retired dependency court judges to mentor judicial officers across the state;

- The Family Well-Being Community Collaborative (FWCC), a multi-disciplinary coalition focused on preparing the child welfare court system to understand and effectively implement the Keeping Families Together Act (E2SHB 1227);
- A new statewide team that will provide coordination and research support for the successful Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Program (FJCIP), which will expand from 10 to 16 courts, thanks to increased funding from the Legislature in 2022.

An example of a recent undertaking by the program is working to infuse the science of hope into the practices and culture of the state’s dependency system.

“Dependency cases are complex, with multiple parties involved in the lives of children and families who have experienced trauma and who are disproportionately poor and people of color,” said FYJP Manager Kelly Warner-King. “Underlying all of our work is a commitment to equity and hope – the belief that the future can be better and we have the power to make it so.”

Family Treatment Court Program

Approximately half of the children in dependency court have a parent with a substance use disorder. In Washington State, 48 percent of all dependency cases filed in 2021 included this as a reason for the removal of a child from their parent’s care, while substance use accounts for nearly 80 percent of the removals of young children and newborns.

Research shows that Family Treatment Courts (FTCs) improve parents’ treatment results and increase family reunification. In 2021, AOC’s Court Improvement Program received a federal grant to create a statewide FTC Team that provides coordinated training, technical assistance and data support that is helping courts improve practices and build capacity for ongoing evaluation.

Washington has 20 Family Treatment Courts and two tribal Healing to Wellness Family Courts being served by this support network. The FTC Team works with DCYF, the state Healthcare Authority and the national organization Children and Family Futures.

Examples of FTC Team activities include:

- Establishing a Steering Committee, a housing subcommittee, and scheduling regular meetings between FTC coordinators and judges to help build an FTC community;
- Developing live, online and self-paced trainings, as well as compiling information on additional training opportunities and resources;
- Developing a performance monitoring tool that generates data visualizations, enabling teams to visually assess their data by race, gender, and status in the program;
- Creating a directory of FTC courts in Washington with contact information;
- Responding to numerous requests for technical assistance and developing a change management workshop that can be held at courts upon request, as well as online change management tools;

JUDICIAL BRANCH PROGRAMS CONTINUED

“When family treatment courts follow best practice, researchers have found that reunification outcomes and parents’ treatment results are considerably better than for those receiving conventional court and child welfare services,” said Warner-King. The FYJP office is beginning the process of seeking state funding to carry on the work launched with the federal grant, which will expire at the end of 2023.

Court Equity and Access Team

In 2016, the National Center for Access to Justice ranked Washington 37th of 52 states and territories in providing access to the courts for people without lawyers. Though the state judicial branch keeps access to justice at the forefront of improvement efforts, the non-unified nature of Washington courts presents challenges in coordinating and implementing services.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, “the challenges of fragmented services and lack of statewide coordination and expertise for providing services to unrepresented litigants became even more apparent,” said authors of a budget proposal from the judicial branch to state lawmakers in 2021. Lawmakers responded with funding for a new Court Equity and Access Team at AOC.

The Equity and Access Team will support Washington courts in developing solutions focused on the unique needs of unrepresented litigants, and support policy implementation and research. Specifically, the team will:

- Conduct an assessment of what services already exist in courts and what is needed, provide strategic planning, and support their needs in serving unrepresented litigants;
- Develop measures of success so efforts can be evaluated and improved over time;
- Identify and share best practices across the state and nationally;
- Provide technical assistance to courts and develop training;
- Ensure inclusion and equity considerations will be at the forefront of all efforts.

An example of one program within the Equity and Access Team is the Courthouse Facilitators Program, with a new coordinator, Kayley Carrillo. The position of Courthouse Facilitator for individual courts was created by lawmakers in 1993 to help self-represented litigants in family law cases. It started in seven counties, but has grown to 31 counties.

The new position will support these facilitators by hosting monthly meetings, establishing a Courthouse Facilitator Advisory Committee, developing a curriculum of initial and ongoing training for the facilitators, updating the manual, and creating and maintaining a directory of facilitator programs.

Behavioral Health Response Team

The 2021 Legislature approved funding for AOC to establish the Behavioral Health Response Team to address the complex needs of people with behavioral health problems who come to court. The Team will develop a coordinated, statewide approach to support courts in working with this population. Elements of the work include:

JUDICIAL BRANCH PROGRAMS CONTINUED

- Coordinating with local courts to develop best practices and sustainability of therapeutic courts;
- Developing a statewide plan to address the behavioral health needs of court users, including collaboration across disciplines with various stakeholders;
- Helping connect courts with additional grants and resources for sustaining therapeutic courts;
- Collaborating with state, regional and local agencies to stay abreast of changes to the behavioral health system, and providing feedback about how proposed changes could impact courts and court users;
- Developing a standardized training plan for emerging and sustained therapeutic courts;
- Ongoing technical assistance, training and support.

“Conservative estimates indicate that 80 percent of individuals who come before the courts have behavioral health issues. That means all courts will deal with these issues whether or not they have established therapeutic courts,” State Court Administrator Dawn Marie Rubio said. “Now AOC has the resources and the subject matter expertise to assist courts with improving their response to people with behavioral health needs. It has also given AOC the bandwidth to expand our state-level relationships with the Health Care Authority and the Department of Social and Health Services.”

Trial Court Legal Services Team

Many courts do not have the resources to bring on law clerks or staff attorneys, but busy judges still need access to legal research and analysis for many of their cases. The new Trial Court Legal Services team at AOC was established to fill that need and “provide more equitable resources across the state,” said John Safarli, principal legal analyst for the new team.

- The team will conduct case-related legal research and provide legal analysis for judges across all types of cases. Some recent examples include:
- Assisting with pretrial motions for an upcoming vehicular homicide trial;
- Analyzing a wrongful termination and disability discrimination lawsuit brought by health care workers asserting they were disabled because they were not vaccinated against COVID-19;
- Assisting with the analysis of a motion to intervene in a dependency action to seek leave to file a *de facto* parentage petition.

Judges can request help with any case, regardless of subject matter including civil, criminal, and domestic cases. The team responds to each request as soon as possible, but requests related to ongoing trials or urgent questions are prioritized. “We encourage district, municipal and superior court judges to use this service. The feedback from judges who have used it has been overwhelmingly positive and the service is completely free,” Safarli said.

In addition to whole programs, new individual positions have been added at AOC to meet specific needs, such as an attorney to help courts and AOC prepare for a coming water rights adjudication that may involve as many as 30,000 claims.

“YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN ATTORNEY” NOW INCLUDES LOW-INCOME TENANTS AND DEPENDENT YOUTH

Indigent tenants facing eviction and greater numbers of children in child welfare (dependency) cases were given the right to court-appointed attorneys by Washington lawmakers in 2021, who approved and provided funding for two innovative programs now being implemented by the Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA).

Both programs have begun operations, and OCLA has requested funding in 2024–2025 to ensure continued implementation — ensuring that tenants and children not only receive court-appointed attorneys, but receive effective legal representation in protecting their rights and legal interests.

Eviction Defense

In 2021, state lawmakers approved and funded a first-in-the-nation program to provide court-appointed attorneys for indigent tenants facing eviction in “unlawful detainer” cases.

“Historically, the balance of power in eviction cases has overwhelmingly favored landlords,” said the bill’s prime sponsor, Senator Patty Kuderer, in 2021. “By establishing the country’s first statewide right to counsel for impoverished tenants, we have created equity in the eviction process.”

Lawmakers appropriated \$24 million for the first two years to establish the statewide appointed counsel program, requiring specific components and status reports. OCLA reported in the summer of 2022 on progress in establishing the unique program. Some key steps have included:

- Establishing coordination and communication with courts, administrators and clerks.
- Developing uniform protocols for courts to follow when tenants appear in eviction cases. To develop these, OCLA worked with the Superior Court Judges’ Association (SCJA) representatives of the rental housing industry and other stakeholders.
- Creating resources such as a “bench card” developed by the SCJA providing information for judicial officers on the new law and program and steps such as advising every unrepresented tenant defendant of their possible right to appointed counsel; providing them with information about where and how to be screened for eligibility, including the number to the Eviction Defense Screening Line; and continuing hearings for time necessary for the screening and appointment to take place.



OFFICE OF CIVIL LEGAL AID CONTINUED

“The Legislature made a bold commitment to justice and fairness by enacting the nation’s first right to court-appointed counsel for indigent tenants in eviction cases. Six months into the program’s full operation, the right to an attorney is clearly a game-changer.”

JIM BAMBERGER
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF CIVIL LEGAL AID

- Engaging established legal aid programs to recruit and train attorneys to serve as court-appointed counsel for indigent tenants in eviction cases. The legislation was effective April 22, 2021. By January of 2022, more than 65 attorneys were hired, trained and serving tenants in all 37 judicial districts across the state.
- Establishing the Eviction Defense Screening Line — (855) 657-8387 — which is staffed by non-attorney screeners, with the information and tools to determine income eligibility for court-appointed attorney assistance.
- Developing statewide training, technical assistance, and supports such as emergency capacity when local programs are at caseload limits.
- Developing data collection and reporting capabilities to ensure proper stewardship of resources and assess the efficacy of the RTC program.

Before the Legislature established the appointed counsel program, tenants were unrepresented in more than 90 percent of eviction cases. Under the new program, court-appointed attorneys represented tenants in nearly 4,500 eviction proceedings between January 1 and October 31, 2022. Every tenant defendant screened and found eligible was appointed an attorney.

Early data indicates that more than 50 percent of tenants represented by counsel — in finalized cases where the outcome is known — remained in their homes. In other cases, counsel were able to negotiate terms including more time to move, relocation money, debt forgiveness, and protection of the tenant’s rental history through orders of limited dissemination.

“The Legislature made a bold commitment to justice and fairness by enacting the nation’s first right to court-appointed counsel for indigent tenants in eviction cases,” wrote OCLA Director Jim Bamberger in the report to the Legislature. “Six months into the program’s full operation, the right to an attorney is clearly a game-changer...ensuring a greater chance of just results.”

OFFICE OF CIVIL LEGAL AID CONTINUED

More information about the tenant appointment counsel program is on [OCLA’s website](#).

Children’s Representation Program

In 2014 the Legislature required juvenile courts to appoint attorneys in dependency cases for all children who remained dependent six months after the termination of parental rights (“legally free” children).

“Dependency” refers to the court process in which the state, through the Department of Children, Youth & Families, assumes responsibility for a child’s welfare due to allegations of neglect or abuse. The process is subject to continuing oversight by the juvenile court.

A [three-year study](#) by the Washington State Center for Court Research, released in 2021, found that attorney representation for children and youth in dependency cases improves the children’s court experiences, reduces disruption to their lives, reduces disruptions in their educational progress, and shortens the time they spend in dependency situations.

Lawmakers responded in 2021 by expanding the right to appointed counsel to all children 8 and older who are involved in juvenile court dependency proceedings, and to all children, regardless of age, in dependency cases where the state seeks to terminate their parents’ legal rights. Unlike the “legally free” program, the new program requires appointment of attorneys at the first court hearing (known as a shelter care hearing).

Administration, implementation, and oversight were assigned to OCLA, which developed the county-by-county implementation schedule in July 2022. Over the next five years, OCLA will recruit, train, support, and oversee contract attorneys who will represent eligible children and youth in all judicial districts in the state. The implementation schedule includes:

- **July 1, 2022:** Lewis, Grant, Cowlitz
- **January 1, 2023:** Yakima, Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, Kittitas
- **January 1, 2024:** Thurston, Mason, Adams, Grays Harbor, Pacific, Klickitat, Skamania
- **January 1, 2025:** Pierce, Whitman, Stevens, Ferry, Pend Oreille
- **January 1, 2026:** Spokane, Lincoln, Kitsap, Clallam, Jefferson, Chelan, Douglas, Clark, Skagit, Whatcom
- **January 1, 2027:** King, Snohomish, Okanogan, Asotin, San Juan, Island, Wahkiakum, Garfield, Columbia

More information on the Children’s Representation Program is available [here](#) on OCLA’s web site.



MODERNIZING CIVIL PROTECTION ORDERS: NEW WEB TOOL AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COURTS RELEASED

A new interactive web resource of recommended best practices in civil protection order cases was developed for courts by a stakeholder group convened by the Washington Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission (GJC). The recommendations are intended to help courts implement requirements of recent legislation designed to streamline the protection order process, making it easier for litigants to navigate.

The recommendations and website were released in June 2022 in response to 2021 legislation — [Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill \(E2SHB\) 1320](#) — a comprehensive revision and consolidation of Washington’s six civil protection order statutes.

“Washington has been a leader in establishing protection orders to increase public safety,” said Benton & Franklin Counties Superior Court Judge Jacqueline Shea-Brown, co-lead of the 1320 Project and co-chair of the GJC’s Domestic and Sexual Violence Committee, which oversaw the project. “E2SHB 1320 continues that work, and this important effort by lawmakers and stakeholders will make the protection order system much more accessible and effective.”

The web report includes recommended best practices regarding:

- Facilitating the receipt of evidence in civil protection order proceedings in ways that protect victim safety and privacy;
- Improving access for unrepresented parties in civil protection order proceedings;
- Concurrent civil protection order proceedings and criminal proceedings concerning the same alleged conduct;
- Uses of technology to reduce administrative burdens in civil protection order proceedings;
- Requirements for private vendors who provide services related to filing systems for civil protection orders; and

- Data collection and sharing to promote research/study and transparency for the public.

Materials available on the website include a protection order script, templates, bench cards for judges, and numerous other resources. The site also includes a link to a December 2021 report submitted to lawmakers by the 1320 Stakeholder Group, [“Civil Protection Orders: Recommendations to Support Access and Safety.”](#) The report included recommendations on matters of jurisdiction, youth litigants, a type of abuse known as “coercive control,” and information sharing between state, tribal and military courts and with courts from other states.

In parallel work, the Administrative Office of the Courts recently enacted system updates and released [new protection order court forms](#) that reflect changes in the law.

Many of the changes required by legislation went into effect on July 1, 2022, while other requirements, such as allowing electronic submission of protection order petitions in superior courts, go into effect in January 2023 and later. The new recommendations and resources were developed by the GJC’s 1320 Stakeholder Group with the support of the Washington State Women’s Commission and other stakeholders including judicial officers, clerks, administrators, attorneys, advocates, and researchers.

“We hope these recommendations and resources will be shared widely,” wrote Judge Shea-Brown and attorney Erin Moody, co-lead of the 1320 Project, in an email to courts announcing the new resources. “We express our deep gratitude to the many individuals and organizations who were vital to the development of these recommendations and resources, for their commitment of time, ideas and energy to this project. In particular we wish to acknowledge the contributions of our topical leads, Timothy Fitzgerald, Elizabeth Hendren, Riddhi Mukhopadhyay, Judge Averil Rothrock, Judge Cindy Smith, and Judge Tanya Thorp.”



INNOVATING JUSTICE AWARDS: INDIAN CHILD WELFARE COURT, RIGHT TO COUNSEL PROGRAM, EXPANDED PRO BONO HELP, FACILITATING COURT DEBT RELIEF

Innovative work by individuals and groups responding to needs in the justice system was recognized by the Washington State Board for Judicial Administration (BJA) in late October 2022. The efforts awarded included a new Indian Child Welfare Court, a baby/toddler court, a collaborative Right to Counsel program for tenants, expanded pro bono services focusing on evictions and racial justice training, and programs that helped thousands of people resolve extensive court debt.

The awards were presented to:

- Clallam County Superior Court Commissioner Brandon Mack (see Page 48 for more information about the Indian Child Welfare Act Court launched in Clallam County;
- Pierce County Superior Court Commissioner Clint Johnson;
- The Clark County Volunteer Lawyers Program;
- For extensive work on court debt relief in several counties — Representative Tarra Simmons and her colleagues at Civil Survival, Kitsap County led by Judge Kevin Hull and his colleagues, Pierce County led by Judge Michael Schwartz and his colleagues, and Thurston County led by Judge Carol Murphy and her colleagues.

The Innovating Justice Awards were established in late 2020 by the BJA as a quarterly recognition of leadership during the COVID crisis that promoted innovation and responsiveness to issues of racial equity and access to justice. The award is now presented annually to an individual or group for exceptional leadership in helping courts deliver innovative and responsive justice using a race equity lens.

“The inventiveness demonstrated by Washington courts to find ways to provide justice safely and equitably during the pandemic has been inspiring. It also shows us the way to do better. Our justice system has not always provided access to justice and substantial equity to all,” said Washington Supreme Court Chief Justice Steven González.

“The inventiveness demonstrated by Washington courts to find ways to provide justice safely and equitably during the pandemic has been inspiring. It also shows us the way to do better. Our justice system has not always provided access to justice and substantial equity to all.

CHIEF JUSTICE STEVEN GONZÁLEZ
WASHINGTON SUPREME COURT



INNOVATING JUSTICE AWARDS CONTINUED

“Adherence to traditional methods can sometimes impede solutions. The BJA wants to encourage and recognize those who find new ways to improve access to justice for all Washingtonians. Commissioner Mack, Commissioner Johnson, the Clark County Volunteer Lawyers Program; Civil Survival, and the Kitsap, Thurston and Pierce county judges that hosted the LFO clinic have all done heroic work and deserve this recognition.”

The 2022 recipients of the BJA Innovating Justice Awards included:

Clallam County Superior Court Commissioner Brandon Mack, for establishing two specialized new family/dependency court calendars — one focused on families who fall under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), and the second focused on families with infants or toddlers.

“Commissioner Mack recognized the role that the court could play not just in enforcing the law, but also in mentoring the participants, teaching about and encouraging application of correct standards, and ensuring that the rights of Native families were protected,” wrote the Clallam County Superior Court judges who nominated him. “At the same time, he also recognized the benefits that would come from dedicating more time and effort to cases involving infants and toddlers. Like ICWA cases, he understood that part of the solution was finding the time to actually do what the law envisions.”

Commissioner Mack and the Court Improvement Team (CIT) worked closely with local tribes to address challenges and develop consensus, and ensure tribal leadership is involved in the process. Mack and the Court Improvement Team also recognized the special needs of families in dependency court who have babies and toddlers up to 3 years old. “Many people have excellent ideas on how to improve the courts’ response to challenges. Undertaking the hard work to bring a vision to reality takes committed effort over a prolonged period of time,” the judges wrote. “Commissioner Mack and the CIT have embodied that effort.”

Pierce County Superior Court Commissioner Clint Johnson, for working collaboratively with local attorneys to “craft one of the most successful Right to Counsel eviction prevention programs in Washington state,” wrote Tacomaprobono Community Lawyers, who nominated him.

“Evictions have disproportionately affected historically underrepresented and underserved communities. This is true across the state, but particularly true in Pierce County,” said the nominating letter. “Commissioner Johnson has been involved from the program’s inception by seeking input on processes from Tacomaprobono, communicating with his colleagues, and patiently building and pivoting where necessary. With his cooperation and support, our program implemented a successful, powerful Right to Counsel program that will help increase access to justice for underrepresented communities for years to come.”

INNOVATING JUSTICE AWARDS CONTINUED

The Clark County Volunteer Lawyers Program, for expanding the scope of the work they do and the resources available to vulnerable persons during the COVID pandemic and “one of the most challenging periods in recent history,” wrote nominator Judge Tsering Cornell.

In addition to the family law, domestic violence survivor and general civil legal aid the program provides, they expanded to include “much needed eviction defense work” and helped put on a training session for the local legal community in combatting both explicit and implicit bias in the courtroom, Cornell wrote. The Clark County Volunteer Lawyers Program is active in both listening sessions and providing feedback to the local bench, and “is seen as a leader in civil legal aid statewide, and their advocacy work has helped bring much needed resources to Clark County and smaller jurisdictions statewide.”

Members of the Civil Survival organization and Kitsap, Pierce and Thurston counties, for working collaboratively to host Legal Financial Obligation (LFO) Reconsideration Days, helping thousands of people find relief from court debt they were unable to pay. The awards were presented to Representative Tarra Simmons and her colleagues at Civil Survival; Kitsap County led by Judge Kevin Hull and his colleagues; Thurston County led by Judge Carol Murphy and her colleagues; Pierce County led by Judge Michael Schwartz and his colleagues.

Research shows the weight of court debt falls heavily on low-income persons and disproportionately on Black, Indigenous and Latino people. “Navigating court processes is daunting for the average person and can often be traumatic, and there is a great need for assistance with the LFO relief process. LFO Reconsideration Days helped provide a specific time and place where individuals could seek help with obtaining LFO relief,” wrote nominator Cynthia Delostrinos Johnson.

“The LFO Reconsideration Days included outreach to the community, working with the clerks’ offices to obtain necessary records for identifying LFOs that were eligible for relief, working with prosecutors and public defense, working with judges who were willing to preside over the cases, and working with court administrators and court staff to help with the flow of the day,” she wrote. “They’ve improved the perceptions of justice for the courts, relieved outstanding LFO debt, and inspired others to find ways to proactively work with communities to deliver justice.”

The Board for Judicial Administration includes judges from all court levels in the state, along with officials from other judicial branch agencies, and is charged with developing policy and providing leadership to the state judicial branch.





2021 CASELOAD STATISTICS

Statistics on the caseloads of the courts of Washington are compiled from the Judicial Information System to provide a detailed overview of the case work of the courts. This page contains one chart from each court level in the state. Dozens of charts are available on the numbers of case filings, types of cases, proceedings and outcomes from the most recent year calculated, as well as hundreds of archived charts for past years' case activities online at www.courts.wa.gov/caseload. Visitors to this page can also sign up to be notified when the most recent reports are available.

Courts of Limited Jurisdiction CASES FILED

	FILED
Traffic Infractions	364,136
Non-Traffic Infractions	12,649
DUI/Physical Control Misdemeanors	19,019
Other Traffic Misdemeanors	40,826
Non-Traffic Misdemeanors	67,033
Felony Complaints	1,423
Civil	85,726
Civil Protection Orders	7,553
Small Claims	5,567
Parking (includes photo-enforced)	878,076
Total	1,482,008

Superior Courts CASES FILED BY TYPE OF CASE

	FILED	RESOLVED	COMPLETED
Criminal	26,526	28,853	29,712
Civil	45,062	42,105	41,364
Domestic	26,397	25,284	25,716
Probate/Guardianship	20,818	17,464	13,247
Adoption/Parentage	3,992	3,762	3,765
Mental Illness/Alcohol	11,355	9,398	8,421
Juvenile Dependency	7,667	8,157	8,243
Juvenile Offender	3,236	3,613	3,762
Total	145,053	138,636	134,230



EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS

Sign up to receive [email notifications](#) when monthly and/or yearly caseload reports are available online.

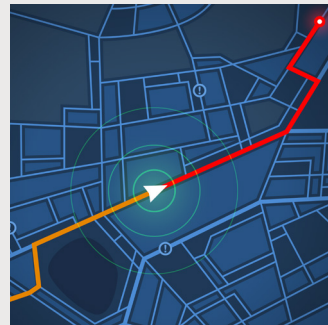
Court of Appeals COURT ACTIVITY

	DIVISION I	DIVISION II	DIVISION III
Filings	1,209	983	680
Resolutions	1,347	1,171	611
Pending at Year End	936	963	693
Mandated	1,664	1,350	753

Supreme Court COURT ACTIVITY BY SOURCE OF REVIEW

	TRIAL COURTS	COURT OF APPEALS	ORIGINAL ACTIONS	WSBA	CERTIFIED ISSUES	TOTAL
Filings	114	898	91	64	6	1,173
Resolutions	121	915	42	64	2	1,144
Pending at Year End	34	325	9	10	6	384
Mandated	138	987	91	63	3	1,282

DISPATCHES FROM THE COURTS



CLARK COUNTY DISTRICT COURT

GPS Monitoring Program That Alerts Domestic Violence Victims

At the beginning of June 2021, Clark County District Court implemented the first Washington State GPS monitoring program that includes victim notification for victims of domestic violence. In response to the murder of Tiffany Hill, the Washington State Legislature enacted the Tiffany Hill bill. Clark County District Court immediately developed a County-Wide planning team consisting of all law enforcement agencies, the 911 dispatch center, Superior and District Courts, prosecuting attorneys, and victims advocates to start building a program. The planning team met twice per month to develop policies and protocols and tested multiple pieces of equipment to determine the program's feasibility.

The planning team finalized our program's policies and protocols in March of 2021 and selected 2 Watch Monitoring to be the vendor who installs, removes, and tracks the GPS equipment for offenders and victims. The planning team spent the months of April and May holding training and informational sessions for all law enforcement agencies, community stakeholders, and community members.

Once training was completed, we launched our program on June 1, 2021. To date, we average twelve offenders on this program daily. This program has successfully increased the safety of victims during the pretrial process.

BRYAN FARRELL
COURT ADMINISTRATOR

DISPATCHES FROM THE COURTS



THURSTON COUNTY DISTRICT COURT

Procedural Justice Initiative

In 2017, Thurston County District Court took part in a "secret shopper" study conducted by the Center for Court Innovation at the Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). A team came in to District Court for a period of three days, without any knowledge of court staff or judges, to experience and document the services provided by the court. The intent of this study was to assess the extent to which the court incorporated aspects of procedural justice into our operations, and create a report detailing observed strengths and challenges, as well as recommendations for a future procedural justice and implicit bias training. A site visit report was prepared and is available to the public. We followed up this study with trainings offered not only to all court personnel and judges, but all our justice partners as well, such as prosecutors, public defense attorneys, judge pro tems, and private counsel.

Following this study, District Court wanted to continue these efforts and establish ways that we could use an ongoing data perspective to regularly be aware of how our services are being utilized. We did not want to have the information go stale in 5 to 10 years, but be an ongoing effort that supports the progress of the courts. District Court partnered with the AOC Washington State Center for Court Research (WSCCR). Following this project, we expanded to the services of our Mental Health and Veteran's Court.

This project continues with Thurston District Court and WSCCR, as we look at other studies that can not only represent Thurston, but courts across all of Washington State. AOC and WSCCR have continued to grow this project through the Data for Justice Initiative.



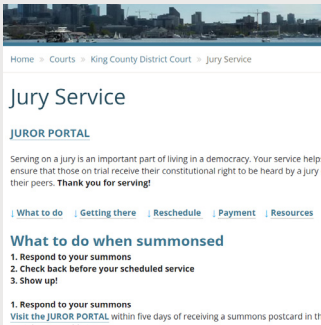
Substance Monitoring Program

In 2021, Thurston County District Court requested funding to support the use of technological monitoring in lieu of incarceration, to be accomplished through the provision of transdermal blood alcohol monitoring devices (BAMD) and random urinalysis (UA) testing of those persons ordered to do so as a condition of release. This provides a proactive approach to case condition monitoring, increases compliance rates while decreasing the rates of incarceration, and decreasing barriers to success for those involved in court matters.

Defendants are often unable to afford costs of BAMD or UA, directly resulting in non-compliance with court orders, increased safety risk to the public and impacts such as incarceration and job loss. The inability to pay should not result in the incarceration of an individual. The Thurston County Board of County Commissioners approved this as a pilot program for the 2022–2023 biennium. The program went live in May of 2022, and has been reporting great success. We've had an amazing opportunity to support hundreds through this program already, allowing those justice involved to be able to focus on compliance with the court and success in their daily lives, while also providing cost savings to the county.

FRANKIE PETERS
COURT EXECUTIVE OFFICER

DISPATCHES FROM THE COURTS



KING COUNTY DISTRICT COURT

New Online Jury Management System Launched

To make it easier for jurors to respond to summons and to serve on a jury, King County District Court launched a new online Jury Management System in 2022. The new system provides jurors and court staff with one convenient platform to accomplish all jury-related tasks.

The Court's new Juror Portal was designed to make the entire jury process simpler and more intuitive for people who have been summoned. It allows them to confirm if they are qualified and able to serve, to request to be excused, to reschedule their service and accomplish other tasks. The system also enables the Court to streamline the jury process, from setting up annual calendars for jury weeks across the Court's multiple locations, to summoning and managing jurors, to preparing juror cost bills.



Partnering to Bring Trauma-Informed Training to Washington Courts

Courts in Washington increasingly recognize the importance of having a trauma-informed perspective, as they often serve people who have experienced a wide range of traumas. The Washington State Legislature also acknowledged this need, as it made having a trauma-informed perspective a key aspect of the new Protection Order law that took effect on July 1, 2022.

To raise awareness of the importance of trauma-informed care in the criminal justice system, King County District Court led a multi-organization effort to attend grant-funded training in 2022, "How Being Trauma-Informed Improves Criminal Justice System Responses," by the U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services. Twenty staff from KCDC and these organizations completed a "Train-the-Trainer" event to provide trauma-informed care training to KCDC staff and judges, as well as to other criminal justice system employees throughout Washington.



King County Regional Veteran's Court Celebrates 10th Anniversary

King County Regional Veterans Court (RVC) celebrated its 10th Anniversary in June 2022 in a special event held in a park adjacent to the Veterans Administration Hospital in Seattle. In addition to celebrating several recent graduates of the Veterans Court program, RVC Presiding Judge Lisa Paglisotti recognized the many team members who make the program successful — including prosecution, defense, court clinicians and the Veterans Administration.

TROY BROWN
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
KING COUNTY DISTRICT COURT

DISPATCHES FROM THE COURTS



LAKEWOOD MUNICIPAL COURT

Lakewood Veterans Court Has Zero Recidivism

Veterans Treatment Court began operation in late 2016 after Lakewood Municipal Court leaders determined an alternative to prosecution was needed in the community for eligible veterans who would benefit from intervention and recovery instead of incarceration.

Since its inception, 24 participants have graduated and three are currently enrolled. Those accepted into the program spend 18 to 24 months participating with rigorous conditions including weekly meetings with probation officers, successful completion of treatment through the Veterans Administration, random drug testing, monthly court appearances and more.

"I am so proud to say that Lakewood's Veterans Treatment Court is making a difference and the proof is in the numbers. Out of all of the Vet Court graduates, not one has returned to the criminal justice system. Zero percent recidivism speaks to the effectiveness of our hands-on, community centered and non-adversarial approach," said Lakewood Municipal Court Judge Lisa Mansfield, who presides over Veterans Treatment Court. "We also work closely with the VA to ensure that our veterans receive the benefits to which they are entitled. My Court Administrator Deana Wright said it best: It is our honor to serve those who have served us."

The team holds a monthly forum/dinner at the courthouse. Veteran participants, family members, veteran mentors and all member of the Veterans Court Team come together to share a meal (prepared by the team) and listen to speakers from the community. By creating this close-knit community, participants see they are not alone in their struggles and they have a network to support them. Veterans Treatment Court is open and very welcome to all who would like to come and observe. It is held the second Wednesday of each month at 2 pm in Lakewood Municipal Court.

The purpose of Veterans Treatment Court is to break the cycle of a veteran's involvement in the criminal justice system by connecting people to treatment rather than punishment, while still working to ensure participant accountability and community safety. It is modeled after other therapeutic courts implemented nationwide. Upon successful completion of these conditions, a veteran will graduate and have their case dismissed.

LISA H. MANSFIELD
MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGE
LAKEWOOD · STEILACOOM · DUPONT
VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

DISPATCHES FROM THE COURTS



SAN JUAN COUNTY DISTRICT AND SUPERIOR COURT

Working Toward a Safer Courthouse

In 2022, San Juan County District Court has been continuing to work with our Superior Court and other local stakeholders on courthouse security. We have no regular weapons screening at our courthouse, and we previously had one portable magnetometer machine (dating back to 1997) that stopped working around 2020. Using funds awarded to us by the Washington Legislature through AOC, this year District and Superior Court jointly purchased a new magnetometer and our first-ever X-ray machine for baggage screening. We are still working on getting sufficient security staff to use the equipment, so we are still not able to have weapons screening on a routine basis at the courthouse. However, we hope to be able to use the magnetometer for some higher-security jury trials in the coming year. The X-ray baggage screening requires more staff, so there remains some work ahead of us before we can implement its use. It remains in its packaging in the courthouse lobby at this time.



Launching Electronic Jury Web Portal

We are implementing an electronic jury web portal so jurors can respond to their summonses electronically. The portal will serve both District and Superior Court. Jurors in San Juan County have had to submit paper returns to their summons by mail or by dropping off at the courthouse. During the pandemic, we saw how greatly we needed ways for jurors to respond to their summons remotely. With the new juror web portal, jurors will be able to respond to their summonses electronically, without paying for postage or traveling to the courthouse. Furthermore, the web portal will improve our ability to communicate with jurors about their upcoming jury service and scheduling. This has been a major project that began in 2021 with CARES funds awarded through AOC, and it has taken all of 2022 to get underway. We hope that by bringing our jury summons process into the 21st century, we can improve our response rates as well as judicial efficiency, and in the event of future public health concerns, jurors can have easier remote access to the justice system.

JUDGE CAROLYN JEWETT
SAN JUAN COUNTY DISTRICT COURT

DISPATCHES FROM THE COURTS



EAST WENATCHEE MUNICIPAL COURT

Mock Trial Held for Successful Careers After School Program

East Wenatchee Municipal Court conducted a mock trial with about 25 students, ranging from 6th through 12th grade, with their parents joining them in the courtroom. The program was held in our chamber office and called Careers After School. We started with a time limit for a quick 15 minute mock bench trial with all the key players in the courtroom. Our probation officer was the witness and a clerk with the Douglas County District Court volunteered to be the defendant. After the mock trial there was time for questions and answers about the trial, and then we had breakout sessions with five groups of five kids each. They had ten minutes with each person who portrayed a position in the trial.

The judge, court staff, prosecutor and defense attorney all had a great time and we had great feedback. It was one of the chamber's most successful programs. We are hoping to do the program once again this year.

MARY BETH PHILLIPS
CCMI COURT ADMINISTRATOR
EAST WENATCHEE MUNICIPAL COURT

DISPATCHES FROM THE COURTS

KING COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

Lawmakers Visit King County Courthouse for Courts 101 Event

State and county elected officials visited King County Superior Court on Oct. 7 to meet with judicial officers and staff, learn about court operations and how recently implemented laws have affected them, and visit courtrooms to observe the depth of issues that come before the court each day.

After a brief orientation, lawmakers observed a virtual hearing before Judge Michael Ryan involving the Uniform Guardianship Act, then observed a Domestic Violence Protection Order calendar heard by Commissioner Jonathon Lack. A Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative (DOSA) calendar before Judge Johanna Bender gave visitors the opportunity to witness the profound challenges faced by individuals with drug offenses who are attempting to overcome substance abuse and forge a new path in their lives. And the Omnibus Calendar, heard by Chief Criminal Judge Karen Donohue, demonstrated the range of factors that affect criminal case proceedings. Finally, Lead Involuntary Treatment Act (ITA) Judge John McHale provided an overview of ITA Court, explaining how an individual may come to be civilly committed, and describing how King County Superior Court has been affected by the statewide crisis in access to mental health treatment.

Following court observation, judges and staff from Superior Court and the Clerk’s Office met with the group to answer questions and discuss what they had just seen.



DISPATCHES FROM THE COURTS



Virtual Jury Selection Transforms the Juror Experience

Selecting people for a jury panel traditionally has been done face-to-face. The COVID pandemic changed all that. No longer was it safe to bring hundreds of people together in jury assembly rooms. Rather than being summoned to a courthouse for jury selection, also known as *voir dire*, jurors received an email from a King County Superior Court bailiff with a video link.

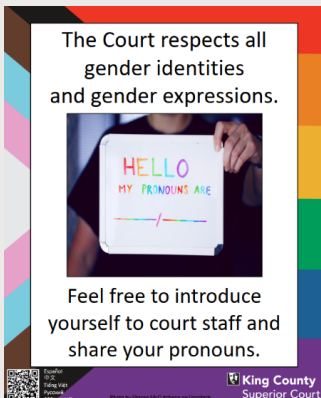
Remote jury selection, or virtual *voir dire*, was put in place quickly in 2020 to facilitate the safe return to jury trials during the pandemic. Throughout 2021, Superior Court’s Jury Department continued to refine the systems that support virtual *voir dire*. A major challenge was the jury management system was created for an in-person process. Jury Department Manager Greg Wheeler and his staff developed workarounds to complete many necessary tasks.

“In the beginning, we were learning on the fly,” Wheeler said. “Over time, we’ve taken input from bailiffs, court staff, judges, attorneys and jurors about what works and what doesn’t and devised solutions that address their concerns.”

Tracking is now being done largely via spreadsheet. Upon receiving the spreadsheet, bailiffs communicate with jurors through email and phone, and send them questionnaires. Jury selection schedules are made for groups of jurors to appear via Zoom. Attorneys are provided access to returned questionnaires and Zoom *voir dire* is done in batches. Virtual jury selection is a more manual process than it is when done in-person, requiring effort from different parts of the court.

“Our judges and bailiffs became much more involved in the pre-*voir dire* process, including the transmission of the juror questionnaire, compilation of results, and management of the *voir dire* panels,” said Judge Matthew Williams, Co-Chair of Superior Court’s Jury Committee. Jurors have expressed their appreciation for remote jury selection, which allows them to participate from the comfort of their own homes, rather than sit for hours in a jury assembly room.

DISPATCHES FROM THE COURTS



Keeping Courtrooms Free of Discrimination Based on Gender Identity and Expression

Judges across Washington are expressly prohibited from discriminating against someone because of their gender identity and gender expression. King County Superior Court Commissioner Jonathon Lack proposed the amendment to Canon 2, part of the Code of Judicial Conduct. The amendment adds “gender identity and gender expression,” to the prohibition against discrimination based on “race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, and political affiliation.” It was approved by the Washington Supreme Court in June.

“People of all gender identities and expressions must be respected in our courts,” Commissioner Lack said. “By approving this amendment, our state’s highest court has made it clear that discrimination based on gender identity and expression is real, harmful, and it has no place in any courtroom in Washington.”

In June, King County Superior Court held a training for judicial officers and court staff on the importance of recognizing and honoring gender diversity. “As judges, we are always learning. We wanted to provide the knowledge, skills, and information necessary to ensure our courtrooms are welcoming to people of all gender identities and expressions,” said Judge Johanna Bender, who co-led the training with Commissioner Lack. Superior Court also placed posters (pictured above) near the entrances to courtrooms inviting people to share their pronouns with court staff. The posters are available in multiple languages.

LINDA K. RIDGE
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
KING COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

COURT OF APPEALS DIVISION III

Taking the Court on the Road to Eisenhower High School

On October 24, 2022, the Court of Appeals, Division III went on the road for a day of oral arguments at Eisenhower High School in Yakima. The Court of Appeals occasionally hears oral arguments outside of its Spokane Headquarters, however this was the first community-based set of oral arguments since the onset of the pandemic. This was the first time that hearings held in a high school were live-streamed over TVW.

Four months of planning and working with the school district made this event successful. The court is very thankful for the positive support from the school district principal and auditorium technology staff. Presiding Chief Judge George



DISPATCHES FROM THE COURTS

Fearing, Acting Chief Judge Robert Lawrence-Berrey, and Judge Rebecca Pennell made up the panel for these arguments. The week prior to the oral arguments, Judges Lawrence-Berrey and Pennell visited the high school civic classes to provide background on the Court of Appeals and answer questions. A few classes sat in the auditorium to watch two of the three oral arguments. Between the second and third cases, the judges took a 45-minute break for questions and answers from the students and teachers. The court plans to continue visiting other high schools and colleges in the future.

TRISTEN WORTHEN
CLERK/ADMINISTRATOR
COURT OF APPEALS, DIVISION III

CLALLAM COUNTY JUVENILE COURT

Shoes, Supplies for Graduating Foster Children, Youth Leaving Detention

The Clallam County Child Advocate Program (CAP) and the Friends of Child Advocates collaborate with many community partners. 2022 experienced the highest number of foster youth graduating high school seen in many years. With the support of community members and local and state grant funding, CAP provided computer/printer bundles to every foster child who graduated high school and was going on to college or technical school. Graduating seniors also had additional expenses such as moving costs, homeware needs, utility deposits, cell phone (data) needs and other living expenses that our program was able to provide. Every year the CAP programs holds a shoe drive to provide a new pair of shoes for every pair of feet in foster care, and regularly provides new shoes for youth participating in Juvenile and Family Services or exiting detention.

Next, the CAP is partnering with local law enforcement, military personnel, first responders and other community members/partners to continue our Shop with a Hero event. This year we will be sponsoring every foster youth and Tribal foster youth above the age of 3 to a \$100 gift card to be used while shopping with a local uniformed hero at our local WalMart. This event brings out volunteers from our local Coast Guard Station, all area law enforcement to include city, county, state, tribal and federal agencies, in addition to local fire and other emergency personnel. This is absolutely our favorite way to wrap up the year.

VALERIE BROOKS
CHILD ADVOCATE (GAL) COORDINATOR
CLALLAM COUNTY JUVENILE AND FAMILY SERVICES



NEWS BRIEFS



INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT COURT LAUNCHED IN CLALLAM COUNTY

The Clallam County Superior Court launched a new Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) court in August 2022, currently one of only 20 such courts in the nation, working in collaboration with the five tribes of the Olympic Peninsula and Clallam County.

An ICWA court is a specialized family/dependency calendar developed around the unique needs and issues of Native children and families, per the 1978 federal Indian Child Welfare Act. The Act provides guidance “...to protect the best interest of Indian Children and

to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families by the establishment of minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children and placement of such children in homes which will reflect the unique values of Indian culture.”

Establishment of the new court was spearheaded by Clallam County Superior Court Commissioner Brandon Mack and the Court Improvement Team (CIT), who developed relationships with the Quileute, Hoh, Makah, Lower Elwha Klallam and Jamestown S’Klallam tribes

as well as the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe located nearby.

The new court was launched along with a two-day Inaugural ICWA Conference for the Olympic Peninsula on August 24 and 25, with judicial and tribal presenters. The collaboration of judicial and tribal leadership is the cornerstone of an effective ICWA court. To symbolize the relationships built between the court and the tribes, the tribes donated tribal flags and items of cultural and spiritual significance to be displayed in the court.



SUPREME COURT AND LAW LIBRARY MOVED TO TEMPORARY OFFICES FOR TWO-YEAR RENOVATION

The Washington Supreme Court and State Law Library moved their offices out of the Temple of Justice on the Capitol Campus in Olympia the first week of July in advance of a two-year renovation of the 109-year-old building.

State lawmakers approved funding for the needed structural upgrades in 2021. The Court and Library relocated to leased space in Tumwater.

Access to all Supreme Court hearings, filing ability and information will continue to be fully available through web, phone and mail services as they have been since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, when the Temple of Justice closed to in-person services. It is anticipated the Temple of Justice will reopen following completed renovations in Spring, 2024.

“During the pandemic, we have learned to be flexible and to work remotely,” said Chief Justice Steven González. “These lessons will help us as we work through these important and

overdue renovations to the Temple of Justice so we have a safe place for the public and staff.”

The Supreme Court resumed in-person oral arguments September 13 in temporary courtroom space in the Cherberg Building on the Capitol Campus in Olympia, though space is limited. All oral arguments continue to be livestreamed and recorded by TVW. The Temple of Justice began construction in 1912, the first state capitol building to be constructed. Renovations will replace aged heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) systems, as well as lighting and plumbing systems throughout the building. The project will cost approximately \$33.5 million.

NEWS BRIEFS CONTINUED



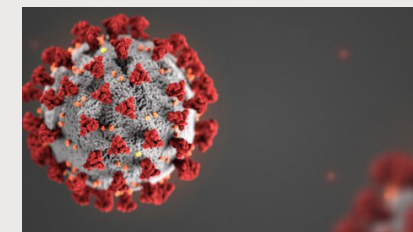
STATE’S FIRST ‘STANDARDS OF PRACTICE’ FOR COURT INTERPRETERS PUBLISHED

The Washington State Court Interpreter Program in September published the state’s first Standards of Practice for Judiciary Interpreters. Written and peer-reviewed by experienced court interpreters, these Standards of Practice serve as a practical guide for interpreters in fulfilling their professional and ethical responsibilities. It is also a valuable resource for judges, attorneys, court administrators, schedulers and others working with interpreters. It is available online and in printed copies.

The report includes sections on accuracy and impediments to accuracy; protocol; non-verbal communication; dealing with such language issues as idiomatic expressions, profane language, words with multiple meanings and unfamiliar words; team interpreting; honesty and attempts to induce violation of the code; impartiality; testifying and serving as an expert witness; and much more.

The Standards are based on General Rule (GR) 11.2 Code of Professional Responsibility for Judiciary Interpreters and was funded by Seattle Municipal Court and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Interpreter Program. The authors thanked Interpreter Commission analyst James Wells and Seattle Municipal Court Judge Damon Shadid for “making this manual possible,” as well as the Judicial Council of California for sharing their manual.

“The judge and jury rely entirely on the interpreted version of testimony to draw conclusions about the credibility of witnesses and the weight of testimony, as will attorneys in deciding how to proceed with their case,” the authors wrote. “Therefore, interpreters must retain every element of information contained in the original message, in as close to a verbatim form as English style, syntax, and grammar will allow.”



SUPREME COURT ORDER RESCINDS MOST COVID MEASURES, RETAINS OTHERS

The Washington Supreme Court issued a new Order concerning emergency measures put in place for safe court operations during the COVID pandemic. The new Order rescinded many of those measures effective November 1, 2022. Some measures were extended pending further review, however, such as authorizations for remote hearings and electronic signatures. Decisions on each measure were made with input from the Superior Court Judges’ Association, the District and Municipal Court Judges’ Association, additional justice system stakeholders, and in consultation with the work of the Board for Judicial Administration’s Court Recovery Task Force. For more information on court operations and adaptations as the pandemic advanced, visit the Washington Courts COVID page.



WASHINGTON SUPREME COURT RESUMES COMMUNITY VISITS, AT GONZAGA IN OCTOBER

Washington Supreme Court justices visited undergraduate and law classes at Gonzaga University and took questions from the public in an open forum during a community visit to Spokane on October 5–6, 2022. This was the Court’s first public visit since 2020 and included oral arguments in three cases — two cases involving involuntary treatment detentions, and one case involving public union negotiations with the City of Spokane.

Prior to the pandemic, the Supreme Court conducted “traveling court” visits to Washington communities two to three times a year. The visits are generally to a college or university, with at least one Q&A forum open to the public, followed by oral arguments in two or three cases also in the community setting. The practice began in 1985 when the Temple of Justice was under renovation for many months and justices needed to find other locations for oral arguments. Justices found the community visits were a good way to demystify the Court, with a chance to answer questions from students, members of the public and local media, and to demonstrate how oral arguments work.

NEWS BRIEFS CONTINUED



JUSTICE DEBRA STEPHENS NAMED JUDGE OF THE YEAR BY WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION FOR JUSTICE

Washington Supreme Court Justice Debra L. Stephens was named 2022 Judge of the Year by the Washington State Association of Justice (WSAJ) for “the central role she has played in the two single biggest drivers of change in recent history: the COVID-19 epidemic and the social movement for racial justice.”

Justice Stephens was sworn in as Chief Justice in January 2020 and “led the judicial branch through its fastest innovations probably ever, converting to largely remote hearings, to ensure the courts remained open during the COVID-19 crisis,” wrote the WSAJ in its award announcement in June. “Also under her leadership the Washington Supreme Court published a remarkable letter — signed by all nine justices — in the wake of the George Floyd killing and subsequent protests. The letter was an unflinching look at the role the judicial system has played in the ‘devaluation and degradation of black lives,’ calling on judges and lawyers alike to improve the system.”



NEW INTERBRANCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BRANCHES

The new Interbranch Advisory Committee (IAC) held its inaugural meeting June 17, 2022, on the Capitol Campus in Olympia and will continue to meet quarterly as a new avenue of communication between leaders of Washington’s branches of government. The Committee is co-chaired by Chief Justice Steven González and state Senator Jamie Pedersen. Washington lawmakers in 2022 established the new Advisory Committee ([RCW 2.76.020](#)) to foster communication, coordination and planning regarding issues of mutual concern among the three branches. Per the RCW, “An additional purpose of the committee is to suggest ways to provide access to justice and to court services in a just and equitable manner.”

The first two meetings, including the most recent in September, have been livestreamed and [recorded by TVW](#). In August, Adrienne Stuart was named coordinator of the IAC. Stuart is former Director of Public Policy at the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council, the former Executive Director at Community Employment Alliance, and a graduate from Seattle University School of Law. “We believe her background in advocacy and legislative work, and her ability to leverage relationships between different

stakeholders to advance the mission of their work will greatly benefit the work of the Interbranch Advisory Committee,” Chief Justice González said.



TRIBAL STATE COURT CONSORTIUM GAINS ANALYST

Mishani Jack-González has taken on the role of Court Program Analyst for the Tribal State Court Consortium (TSCC). This position will be working with the Supreme Court Commissions and new Equity and Access program of the Administrative Office of the Courts. Jack-González had previously served at the US District Court for the Eastern District of Washington where she worked as a case administrator. Prior to that, Jack-González worked for the Yakama Nation Justice Services for several years including work as a court advocate with the Public Defender Office, where she was admitted to practice as Lay Counsel, and as the tribal court clerk and eventually tribal court administrator.

“Mishani has a deep understanding of the issues tribal communities, including her own, experience in the tribal and state justice systems,” said Cynthia Delostrinos, Associate Director of AOC’s Office of Court Innovation. TSCC is a joint effort between state and tribal courts to expand communication and collaboration. The TSCC provides an open forum where state and tribal court judicial officers and court staff can

NEWS BRIEFS CONTINUED

come together to discuss jurisdictional issues, gaps in services, and ways to develop lasting partnerships. Learn more on the [TSCC web page](#).



2022 LEGISLATION OF INTEREST TO THE COURTS

The 2022 Washington State Legislative session brought an additional \$110 million into the state judicial branch spread among projects and initiatives involving therapeutic and family courts, technology, *Blake* decision response, trial court backlogs, eviction resolution, staffing, court security and much more. Many policy-only bills also involved the judicial branch, such as the process for filling judicial vacancies in single-judge courts, and juvenile diversion agreements. Read about [2022 Legislation](#) that affected the judicial branch on the Administrative Office of the Courts’ page of [annual legislative summaries](#).



SPOKANE’S TIM FITZGERALD IS COUNTY CLERK OF THE YEAR

Spokane County Clerk Tim Fitzgerald has been named Clerk of the Year by the Washington State Association of County Clerks Association (WSACC). The award is presented for service, training, and willingness to assist “beyond the call of duty,” having made significant contributions to improving the service of the Association.

Fitzgerald worked extensively on legislation and served as the chair of the Technology Subcommittee for the 1320-Protection Order Work Group and chaired other subcommittees regarding legal financial obligations. He served on the courthouse Security Task Force of the Board for Judicial Administration (BJA), and on the association’s executive board as the immediate past president. “Tim was President when the *State v. Blake* decision came down, leading to many meetings and decisions. Tim has always maintained a high level of professionalism and communication with the association,” wrote the WSACC. “During an outlandish year of change, Tim maintained a professional level of composure and a sense of humor. His dedication to keep the association informed has been a great asset.”



COURT OF APPEALS DIVISION II NAMES NEW COMMISSIONER

The judges of the Washington Court of Appeals, Division II, appointed Karl Triebel to the position of court commissioner, effective December 1, 2022. Commissioner Triebel replaces long-time Commissioner Eric B. Schmidt, who is retiring. Prior to joining the Court of Appeals, Commissioner Triebel served as a lead staff attorney at the Washington Supreme Court where he drafted rulings for the Supreme Court Commissioner’s Office.

“Commissioner Triebel brings extensive knowledge and experience both as an appellate advocate in the Illinois Attorney General’s Office and as a staff attorney at our state’s highest court. Karl has a strong commitment to justice and we are confident he will excel in the critical role of commissioner,” said Court of Appeals Div. II Chief Judge Rebecca Glasgow. “We are very happy to welcome him to the court.”

Appellate court commissioners are judicial officers, subject to the Code of Judicial Conduct, who perform numerous judicial duties such as resolving parental dependency and termination appeals and deciding procedural matters. Commissioners enable the court to hear more cases and reduce delays.

NEWS BRIEFS CONTINUED



WASHINGTON JUDICIAL EDUCATOR RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The National Association of State Judicial Educators (NASJE) unanimously presented the association's 2022 Karen Thorson Award to Judith Anderson of Washington's Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The award recognizes a career judicial educator who has made significant contributions to NASJE and judicial branch education overall. According to the award announcement, "Judith has been an integral part of NASJE since 1984... She was instrumental in working on the NASJE curricula and helped secure the State Justice Institute grant that funded that project." Anderson was presented the award at the association's 2022 Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA.

Anderson supervises AOC's Court Education Services team as they develop education and training programming for judicial officers, administrators, county clerks and court staff. Washington is currently developing a Learning Management System and growing their online education and training. Anderson also works with the Judicial Assistance Services Program, a group of peer counselors trained to prevent or alleviate problems before they jeopardize a judicial officer's career.



FAMILY REUNIFICATION DAY CELEBRATIONS RETURN

Courts, families and welfare workers in 17 Washington counties held in-person celebrations of family reunification during the summer of 2022, the first time since 2020 they have been able to gather safely to recognize the hard work of parents and those who supported their progress toward reunification. "Reunification is such a beautiful word," said Parent Representative Tonia McClanahan, co-chair of the Washington State Family Reunification Day Steering Committee. "We get to celebrate parents with their families and highlight all the hard work they've done to reunify. Many of these parents then become parent allies who use their lived experience to help other parents through the process. It is the best kind of mentoring."

The statewide recognition of [Family Reunification Month](#) is sponsored by the Washington Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care.

"As a former foster parent of over eight years and having worked in the area of dependency and reunification for over twenty years, I'm well aware that no matter the reason a child was removed from a parent's custody, the child most always craves for return," said Kitsap County Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Bassett, co-chair of the Steering Committee. "Helping a parent along that path and seeing a

family made whole once again should be the primary goal for all of us, and remains the best outcome for a child in the majority of dependency cases."



WASHINGTON COURTS CELEBRATE NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY IN PERSON AND VIRTUALLY

More than 30 Washington state foster children were adopted during a dozen National Adoption Day celebrations in courts across the state. Washington courts and communities on November 17 and 18, 2022 celebrated the 18th statewide recognition of the importance of stable families to all children.

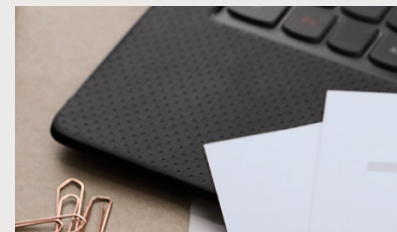
"We hope by celebrating National Adoption Day we can highlight how many children in our own communities and state are hoping to find a new family where they can find love and stability," said Washington Supreme Court Justice Barbara Madsen, chair of the Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care. "Watching adoptive parents and children come together to create new families is inspiring. It is hard to describe how important this is in the lives of the children, and to our communities."

At the beginning of November, 6,272 children were in foster care in Washington state, with 992 legally free to be adopted into new families. Washington's statewide celebration — set for the Friday before Thanksgiving

NEWS BRIEFS CONTINUED

— was launched in 2005 by the Washington Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care and is co-sponsored by the state Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Superior Court Judges' Association, and by WARM 106.9's Teddy Bear Patrol program.

Information on individual county celebrations can be found on [Washington Courts' National Adoption Day page](#).

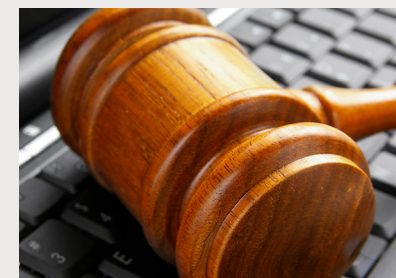


NEW APPELLATE COURT DOCUMENT WEB PORTAL LAUNCHED IN SEPTEMBER

Documents in Washington Court of Appeals and Supreme Court cases are now available through a web portal launched in September by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and state Appellate Courts. No registration is needed to search for documents and the service is free of charge.

The new [Appellate Court Public Document Portal](#) provides the public with online access to files and documents for Appellate cases filed after January 1, 2020. A case number will be required for the search. As with other electronic court records, files that are sealed or confidential will not be available. The portal will not provide links to local trial court records.

"The success of this project would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the appellate clerks, appellate court staff, AOC technical staff, AOC business staff and the technology vendor," said AOC Court Business Office Manager Jamie Kambich. Additional search portals for trial court case and person records can be found on AOC's [Search Case Records](#) page. Additional details and links involving court records can be found in the online [Access to Court Records Brochure](#).



COURTS OF LIMITED JURISDICTION CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CLJ-CMS) PROJECT MOVES TO 2023

The launch date of the statewide CLJ-CMS project has been delayed from its planned pilot go-live date of October 17, 2022, into 2023 to manage an "accumulation of challenges our team has faced over the last two years of implementation," said Project Manager Garret Tanner. "The CLJ-CMS Project is going strong and this delay will ultimately benefit the project as a whole."

The CLJ-CMS Project will bring a new case management system, "Enterprise Justice," to district and municipal courts across Washington, as well as public electronic filing (eFile &

Serve) and a probation/supervision system (Enterprise Supervision), all products of Tyler Technologies. Two additional products have been added to the project — Defendant Access, a portal which will allow court users to make online payments, and re:Search, which enhances public access.

The arrival of COVID had a significant impact on the project schedule. The project schedule was created before the pandemic and its many impacts on courts, AOC and the vendor. This compounded other challenges that arose in implementing the Supervision system, something that has never been done in Washington state; ensuring that incoming and outgoing data is captured, displayed and shared correctly within the system and with justice partners; and ensuring vigorous end-to-end testing.

A number of courts have asked to integrate Enterprise Justice with outside software systems (third party systems), which raises significant questions regarding data security. The Judicial Information System Committee (JISC) has agreed to pursue an enterprise integration platform as an infrastructure project outside of the CLJ-CMS, and project leaders will determine how that may impact the project schedule.

"This additional time is dedicated to getting these systems set up correctly, and minimizing problems once they are operating," Tanner said. "Our goal is to ensure a good transition experience from JIS/DISCIS to the new systems."

Tanner welcomes questions at CLJCMSProject@courts.wa.gov.



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