

Legal Financial Obligations Collections Program

Paying Court Costs, Fees, Fines and Restitution

Due to ongoing public health concerns, our collectors are working remotely. They can be reached at 206-477-0818 or LFOColl@kingcounty.gov.

Legal Financial Obligations (LFO)

- Restitution are those costs imposed by the court to compensate victims who were either injured and/or suffered loss of or damage to property as a result of the offense.
- Non-restitution LFOs are the fees and fines ordered by the court. The most common fees and fines are Victim Penalty Assessment and the DNA database fees. Other elements may consist of things like court costs, costs of defense or jury fees.
- Interest accrues on LFOs from the date of the judgment and during the entire period of incarceration, or until the principal is paid in full. The current rate is 12% annually.
- Collections fees may be added.

LFO Collections Program Staff

The LFO Collections Program staff continually strive to provide the highest level of collections services. We strive to ensure defendants are aware of the status of their debt and that victims receive their court ordered restitution as quickly as possible.

PROGRAM FUNCTIONS

To plan and monitor the collection of court-ordered LFO payments on adult criminal convictions through the King County Superior Court.

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM

- Collection of restitution due to victims.
- Collection of monies ordered that benefit other programs (i.e., crime victims, drug fund, and court costs).
- Improved compliance of payment and other terms of sentences, thereby improving chances for successful re-entry.

Victims: Frequently Asked Questions

- Who is responsible for collecting restitution?
 - Department of Corrections (DOC) is responsible for the collection of legal financial obligations (LFOs) while the defendant is under DOC supervision or in DOC custody (prison). When in custody if funds are deposited into the Trust Account of the defendant who owes LFOs, DOC usually deducts 20% of the deposit for payment of their LFOs.
 - After the defendant is released from supervision and/or custody the Clerk's Office is responsible for collection.
- Does the defendant make restitution payments directly to the victim?
 - No, the defendant makes restitution payments directly to the Clerk's Office. The Clerk's Office will then issue and mail a check to the victim. The process may take several weeks.

- How will I receive my restitution?
 - Although restitution may be part of a court ordered sentence or disposition, victims are not guaranteed payment. Payments are dependent on how much financial resources the defendant has. Collecting restitution can be a lengthy and frustrating ordeal for victims who are attempting to recover emotionally, physically and financially in the aftermath of a crime.
 - Distribution of restitution that has been collected from the defendant will normally occur within 15 days after payment is received by the clerk. In the event there are multiple victims, the payment amount will be pro-rated to each victim when disbursed.
 - The clerk does not issue checks for less than \$10.00 per victim because this is not economically feasible. Therefore, the clerk will wait until there is a more substantial amount to disburse. It is very important that the Clerk's Office has your correct address so payments can be forwarded as quickly as possible.
- As a victim, how can I update my address or name with the court?
 - You will need to provide documentation to the Clerk's Office of your address or name change. Downloadable instructions are available [here](#).
- What happens if the defendant fails to make a payment?
 - If the defendant has financial resources and fails to make timely payments, actions taken may include, but are not limited to the following: 1) garnishment or attachment of wages or other assets, 2) property liens, 3) Notice of Violation resulting in a court appearance, and 4) the victim also has the right to pursue collections on his/her own (see below).
- What if I want to pursue restitution collections on my own?
 - You may pursue collection of restitution from the defendant in the same manner as a civil judgment. This is your right as a victim. All funds collected must be deposited into the Registry of the Court for distribution to victims and accurate maintenance of accounting records.

Defendants: Frequently Asked Questions

- I have not received a billing statement. What should I do?
 - Contact the LFO Collections Service staff to see if we have your current address. You are responsible for making monthly payments and will need to remember to make them even if you do not receive a statement. Statements will be mailed every three months to your last known address. Each statement will contain three pink envelopes for mailing payments (one for each of the next three months).
- Why does the balance on my bill or letter I received seem higher than what I thought I owed?
 - You may have been ordered to pay restitution at a hearing post-conviction. LFOs accrue interest at the rate of 12% per annum, beginning from the date of judgment until the principle amount is paid in full. A collection fee may have been added. An appellate Court may have added costs in a mandate.
- Why are the co-defendants not paying their equal share of restitution?
 - Generally, all co-defendants together are responsible for the total amount of restitution owed until paid in full.
- Can I set up a payment plan?
 - Yes, in most cases. You can ask that the payment plan be adjusted based on your current income. Call the LFO Collections Service staff person who assists you (based on your last name). You will be asked to complete a Financial Declaration form and return it with the required supporting documentation. Keep in mind that in order to see your outstanding LFO amount decrease, your monthly payments will need to be more than your monthly interest accrual and any collection fees.

- Can I make my payments using my bank's Online Bill Pay service?
 - No. However, you may sign up for automatic payments using an electronic funds transfer (EFT) process. You must authorize the Clerk's Office to withdraw payments directly from your bank account. To do so, complete the Automatic Payment Authorization for and return it to the Clerk's Office.
- What if I cannot make a payment?
 - The court wants to see consistent monthly payments. If you are unable to make consistent monthly payments, call the LFO Collections Service staff person assigned to your case.
- What if I made an overpayment?
 - If it is determined that an overpayment was made, a refund check will be issued and mailed to your address on file.
- What if I don't agree with the balance or I think there are missing payments?
 - You will need to compare your payments with the court's payment history and provide evidence that your account is in error. Examples of "evidence" are court receipts or a copy of the front and back of a cancelled money order or cashier's check.
- How can I obtain a copy of my payment history?
 - **In Person:** Come to the Clerk's Office in the King County Courthouse, 516 Third Ave, Room E-609, Seattle. Go to the Accounting counter and request a payment history. The cost is 50 cents per page (cash or check only).
 - **By Mail:** Include the following information when requesting a payment history: 1) Case Number, 2) Name and Address, 3) a \$10.00 deposit fee, per case number, and 4) a self-addressed stamped envelope with sufficient postage. Send the request to: King County Clerk's Office, Attn: Accounting, 516 Third Ave, E-609, Seattle, WA 98104
 - **Fees:** A deposit of \$10.00 is required for each case number. Only checks drawn on a Washington State bank, and include the name and address of the payer imprinted on the check, will be accepted. If you do not have a Washington State bank account, you may send a Cashier's Check or Money Order in US funds for deposit. If the total payment history cost is less than \$10.00, the excess will be refunded to you within two weeks.
- Do you report to the credit bureaus?
 - The Clerk's Office does not report directly to the credit bureaus; however, LFOs are entered into the court record as a civil judgment. Civil judgments are public record and are generally picked up by the credit bureaus.

Payment Information

PAY IN-PERSON

You can pay in-person with cash, money order or cashier's check. No personal checks. Make the money order or cashier's check payable to: "King County Clerk"

To pay in-person come Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 4:30 at one of the Clerk's Office Locations ([directions here](#)).

PAY BY MAIL

You can pay by mail with money order or cashier's check only. No personal checks. Make the money order or cashier's check payable to: "King County Clerk"

Forms and Documents for Download

| # | Document |
|---|---|
| 1 | Automatic Payment Form (Linked page is not translated.) |
| 2 | Financial Declaration (Linked page is not translated.) |
| 3 | Payment Instructions |
| 4 | Victim Address Update Info |

On the front of the money order or cashier's check, print:

1. Your Name as it appears on the court order

2. Each case number that you are making a payment on
3. The \$ amount you are paying next to each case number

If you would like a receipt mailed to you, send a self-addressed and stamped envelope with your payment.

Mail payment to:

King County Superior Court Clerk
ATTN: Cashiers
516 3rd. Ave, Room E-609
Seattle, WA 98104

Sign-Up for LFO Payment Reminders

[Click HERE](#) (Linked page is not translated.) and enter your phone number or email address to receive monthly text or email reminder messages.

Scroll down the list to the ***Superior Court Clerk's Office*** and check the box for ***Superior Court - LFO Payment Reminders***.

Submit a Defendant Address Update

LFO billing statement address update form. [Click here to provide a new mailing address](#). NOTE: The case number(s) is required.

Contact the LFO Collections Program Staff

Main Number: (206) 477-0818

Or, by defendant's last name:

A - F (206) 477-0819

G - N (206) 477-0824

O - Z (206) 477-0820

Available Monday through
Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00
p.m.