



Prosecution

Objective:

Ensure fair and accessible justice systems

Strategy:

Prosecute accused individuals fairly and efficiently

Why is this strategy important?

Fair and efficient prosecution is critical to ensuring fair and accessible justice systems, overall. The mission of the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) is to serve the interests of justice by handling cases efficiently and fairly, while balancing the interests of accountability and public safety.

How is our performance?

For felony-level cases, 78 percent resulted in a plea in 2011, up from 76 percent in 2009. For District Court, misdemeanor cases, and Juvenile Court cases, data on plea rates is not possible to track, giving limitations with the database systems. In District Court, King County Prosecutor's Office total filings have decreased between 2008 and 2011, although there was a significant increase in filings in 2009 and 2010. For Juvenile Court, overall referrals from law enforcement have decreased. The number of cases filed by Prosecution is a smaller proportion of all cases referred by law enforcement because the Prosecutor's Office receives cases for review that they are then required by law to divert to the Community Accountability Board Diversion program, overseen by Juvenile Court.

Over the past four years, the PAO has undertaken multiple initiatives aimed at reducing felony caseload and diverting low-level adult and juvenile cases from the criminal justice system. This ensures that the PAO has resources to fairly prosecute more serious cases and ensure the fair treatment of all those accused of crimes.

- In 2008, the PAO began filing low-level drug felonies as expedited misdemeanors in District Court and referring low-level property felonies to municipalities for prosecution as misdemeanors.
- In 2009, the PAO launched an improved Truancy and Dropout Prevention program to divert truant youth out of the juvenile court system and into school-based workshops designed to facilitate coordination among the school representatives, parents, and youth so that each party takes concrete steps to reengage the youth in the education system.

- In 2011, the PAO piloted a new juvenile pre-filing diversion program. The 180 Program is a PAO and community partnership designed to divert low-level juvenile offenders facing their first or second misdemeanor charge out of the court system and into a half-day community based workshop, where participating youth hear from community leaders about the importance of positive choices. This program was formally launched in January of 2012, and is on course to divert approximately 400 youth during 2012..
- In 2011 the PAO initiated the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) with the Defender Association and other partners to divert low level drug and prostitution offenses out of our jail and legal system into immediate wrap around services.

Moving forward

In 2013, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office will continue to focus on providing efficient and fair prosecution through a new adult pre-filing misdemeanor diversion program. The program will give people arrested for possession of less than 40 grams of marijuana, minor in possession, or possession of drug paraphernalia the option to spend a day in Work Crew or another suitable alternative, rather than having the charge filed. This program is projected to divert 300 cases from the justice system. These programs also support Strategic Plan efforts to **provide a continuum of jail diversion programs and support prevention and early intervention programs for children and youth most at risk.**

Related Links

[LEAD Program, Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion](#)

[King County Prosecuting Attorney](#)

Technical Notes

Data provided by King County Prosecutor's Office and Office for Performance, Strategy, and Budget.

Charts and Maps

King County Superior Court Felony Prosecution

	2009	2010	2011
Number of cases resolving in a plea	5,596	5,051	4,867
Percent of cases resolving in a plea	76%	79%	78%
Median days to resolution	83	86	92

Data Source: King County Prosecutor's Office

King County District Court Prosecution

	2011	2010	2009	2008
Filed by the Prosecutor	6,762	9,245	9,536	8,165
Prosecutor Declined to File Case	1,332	2,965	4,232	2,110
Returned to Law Enforcement for Follow Up	223	356	226	230
Other	2,780	3,803	3,459	1,982
Total referred from Law Enforcement	11,097	16,369	17,453	12,487

Data Source: King County Prosecutor's Office

Other includes cases that have been logged as received and pending a filing decision, jail booking forms, cases being monitored as part of a diversion program.

King County Juvenile Court Prosecution

	2011	2010	2009	2008
Filed by the Prosecutor	2,366	3,193	3,861	3,657
Diverted by Law (Estimate)	2,367	2,759	3,179	3,371
Declined to File or Returned to Law Enforcement for Follow Up	1,186	947	908	1,401
Total referred from Law Enforcement	5,919	6,899	7,948	8,429

Data Source: King County Prosecutor's Office