



## Timely Court Cases

### Objective:

Ensure fair and accessible justice systems

### Strategy:

Manage and resolve court cases in a timely manner

### Why is this strategy important?

A key goal of the King County court system is to manage and resolve cases in a timely manner. Timely case resolution reduces the amount of time that defendants and juvenile offenders are detained and allows defendants/offenders and their families to move on with their lives. Timely resolution is important for civil cases, because unnecessary delay creates a barrier for residents needing to address legal civil matters. In addition, timely case resolution makes efficient use of county resources.

### How is our performance?

Time to disposition is a fundamental caseflow measure that assesses the length of time it takes the court to process cases. It compares the court's performance with state guidelines for timely case processing. King County Superior Court processes about 90 percent of its adult criminal cases, and more than 90 percent of its juvenile offender cases, within state guidelines. King County Superior Court meets its goal for processing civil cases within 24 months nearly all the time (98 percent of active cases have been resolved within 24 months). This means that residents do not face a lengthy delay when filing civil cases.

Many factors influence the court's ability to dispose of cases. In adult criminal and juvenile offender cases, all criminal justice agencies, including law enforcement, prosecution, defense, the clerk's office, and detention, play a role in moving cases forward. Superior Court works diligently in all areas to resolve cases expeditiously. In the civil arena, the court is in the process of reducing the normal civil trial case schedule from 17.5 months to 12 months. The court also operates the Mandatory Arbitration Program, which provides targeted assistance in cases where less than \$50,000 in damages is sought.

In the Family Law arena, Early Resolution Case Managers are available to help unrepresented litigants reach agreement and resolve their cases early. Family Law Facilitators provide forms, checklists, and other information that helps unrepresented litigants come to their hearings prepared. Mediation services and settlement conferences also speed case resolution.

In the criminal arena, court limitations on case "continuances" and court-enforced deadlines to either plea or set a date for trial have significantly reduced case processing delays. And overall, statistical management and regular review of statistical reports; recent in-depth caseflow assess

ments for criminal, juvenile offender, and mental illness caseload; and the court's trial assignment process, which matches judicial availability with cases ready for trial, all contribute the efficient and effective resolution of Superior Court cases. It is efforts such as these that result in a low trial rate.

## Moving forward

King County Superior Court tracks time to disposition on an ongoing basis. When problems are observed, the court works with its justice system partners to identify and eliminate their underlying causes.

Creating a standard tracking method for this data is a future goal for District Court when the full time Court Analyst position is filled.

## Related Links

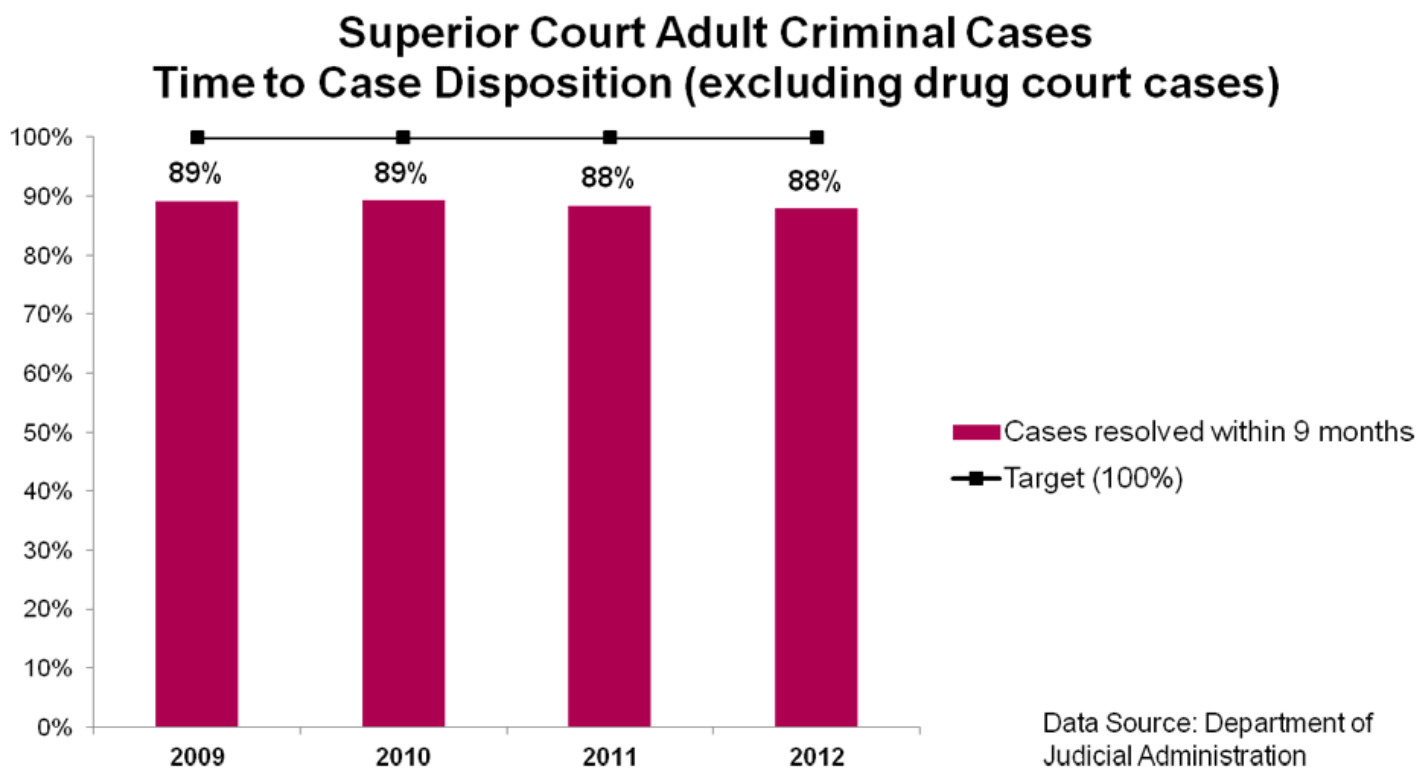
[King County District Court Relicensing Program](#)

[King County Partnership for Youth](#)

## Technical Notes

Superior Court Time to Disposition statistics provided by the Department of Judicial Administration.

## Charts and Maps



## Superior Court Juvenile Cases Time to Case Disposition

	Cases resolved within 9 months (goal: 100%)	Cases resolved in over 9 months	Total Cases
2011	93%	7%	2,645
2010	91%	9%	3,473
2009	96%	4%	3,256
2008	97%	3%	3,525

Data Source: Department of Judicial Administration

## Superior Court Civil Case Time to Resolution

	Active Cases in pending status less than 24 months	Active Cases in pending status more than 24 months	Total Cases
2009	97%	3%	11,299
2010	98%	2%	9,969
2011	98%	2%	9,238

Data Source: Department of Judicial Administration

## Superior Court Adult Criminal Cases Resolved by Trial

	Percent of Cases with no Trial	Percent of Cases with a Trial	Total Cases
2011	95.1%	4.9%	6,056
2010	95.4%	4.6%	6,223
2009	95.0%	5.0%	7,311

Data Source: Department of Judicial Administration

## Superior Court Juvenile Criminal Cases Resolved by Trial

	Percent of Cases with no Trial	Percent of Cases with a Trial	Total Cases
2011	95%	5%	2,645
2010	94%	6%	3,473
2009	94%	6%	3,256
2008	95%	5%	3,525

Data Source: Department of Judicial Administration