

King County Superior Court
2012 Annual Statistical Report

Department of Judicial Administration
Prepared by: Shiquan Liao, Ph.D., Statistician

January 20, 2013

Report #: YR-2012

2012 Highlights

This 2012 annual statistical report presents information on filings, resolutions, pending caseload, and trials in King County Superior Court (KCSC). Because of the year-end update and adjustment, a slight difference may exist between the statistics in this annual report and the statistics in the quarterly reports.

- **Filings** (Table 1). The total number of cases filed in 2012 was lower than that in 2011 (-4.5%). In 2012, the total filings (including “Matters Filed with Clerk”) were 69,880 cases. However, the change in filings was non-uniform across filing categories. In 2012, criminal filings continued to be low, but at the same level of 2011. The criminal filings were 5,942 cases in 2011, showing a decrease of only 0.7% from 2011. General civil filings (case type 2, excluding Clerk’s filings and civil RALJ) decreased significantly (-3,029 cases, or -11%) from 2011. Domestic filings (case type 3) in 2012 showed a decrease of 2.4% from 2011. Significant decrease in filings was observed in Adoption (-26%), BECCA (at-risk youth, child-in-need of service, and juvenile truancy, -5%) and juvenile offender (-10%) in 2012 when compared with previous years. Juvenile offender filings reached another historically low volume of 2,249 cases in 2012. Mental Illness filings increased again in 2012, totaling 3,591 cases (+2%). In addition, there were 1,972 post-disposition modifications in the domestic and paternity cases in 2012.
- **Resolutions** (Table 2). The total resolutions (including “Matters Filed with Clerk”) in 2012 were 70,411 cases, a 2.8% decrease from that in 2011. The total resolutions exceeded the total filings for general civil and MI cases in 2012. However, the resolution pace was slightly behind the filing pace of criminal and juvenile offender cases. No significant gap between the filings and resolutions was observed for other categories in 2012.
- **Pending Caseload** (Table 3). The overall pending caseload at the end of 2012 was 19,396 cases, showing an overall decrease of 2% from 2011 (-2%). The pending caseload in criminal and paternity increased 9% and 32%, respectively from 2011. Pending caseload in general civil (-8%) and Mental Illness (-41%) decreased from a year ago. No significant change was seen in the pending caseload in any other categories.
- **Trials**. Overall, there were 403 jury trials in 2012. There were 566 non-jury trials and 1001 juvenile fact-findings in 2012. In addition, there were 374 trials by affidavits and stipulated trials in 2012.
- **MRJC vs. SEA** (Table 4). Of the total 69,880 cases (including Matters filed with the Clerk) filed in 2012, 37% were MRJC cases. However, no cases in the following categories were assigned to MRJC: mental illness, juvenile offender. The MRJC resolutions (37%, as a percentage of total resolution in KCSC) in 2012 were the same as the filings at MRJC (37%). At the end of 2012, the MRJC pending caseload was 34% of that of the entire court, including all case categories. In 2012, filings at MRJC in criminal, civil and domestic cases were 43%, 43% and 37% respectively.

Table 1. Annual Filings

Category	Annual Filings										2011-2012 Change (%)
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Criminal	10,026	9,962	9,901	10,648	10,767	8,667	6,498	6,691	5,986	5,942	-44
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	27,304	27,567	26,915	25,469	26,020	27,577	29,821	27,632	27,542	24,513	-3,029
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	12,781	11,630	12,332	12,536	12,784	13,881	14,662	15,586	14,799	15,046	247
Domestic	7,525	7,507	7,837	7,750	7,720	7,254	7,673	7,850	7,865	7,678	-187
Probate	4,857	5,082	4,876	5,136	5,363	5,373	5,110	5,203	5,417	5,492	75
Guardianship	984	832	831	875	885	901	841	893	837	879	42
Adoption	877	884	846	751	717	772	685	686	688	511	-177
Paternity	1,555	1,508	1,394	1,199	1,421	1,147	1,233	1,189	1,039	1,161	122
Mental Illness	2,189	2,317	2,342	2,225	2,397	2,420	2,727	3,059	3,506	3,591	85
Juvenile At-Risk Youth and Child-in-Need-of-Service	526	478	399	413	411	417	341	347	303	242	-61
Juvenile Dependency/Termination	975	968	887	945	971	888	903	1,038	1,060	1,050	-10
Juvenile Truancy ⁽²⁾	1,874	1,755	1,803	2,204	2,111	2,512	2,083	1,614	1,350	1,271	-79
Juvenile Offender	5,497	4,788	4,085	4,178	3,954	3,803	3,967	3,356	2,496	2,249	-247
Criminal RALJ	308	261	287	247	225	214	180	176	191	192	1
Civil RALJ	140	112	119	93	95	73	86	64	57	63	6
Total	77,418	75,651	74,854	74,669	75,841	75,899	76,810	75,384	73,136	69,880	-3,256
Post-disposition Modifications (domestic/paternity)		1,991	1,838	1,812	1,761	1,820	2,005	1,964	2,018	1,972	-46

(1) The statistics in this table include "Civil Matters Filed with Clerk", which are reported separately in the quarterly report. "Civil Matters Filed with Clerk" consist of those civil cases that require no or little judicial resources. This category includes the following cause codes of civil actions: Abstract of Judgment, Foreign Judgment, Tax Warrant, and Transcript of Judgment.

(2) Juvenile truancy filing became mandated on 10/1/1995.

Table 2. Annual Resolutions

Category	Annual Resolutions										2011-2012 Change (%)
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Criminal	8,959	9,516	9,478	9,937	11,051	9,619	7,644	6,521	6,285	5,594	-691
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	27,245	28,035	29,556	26,436	26,792	27,293	28,815	28,902	28,797	25,688	-3,109
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	12,772	11,619	12,334	12,536	12,784	13,900	14,662	15,590	14,799	15,046	247
Domestic	7,749	7,659	7,689	7,825	7,705	7,194	7,530	7,781	7,952	7,713	-239
Probate	4,735	4,984	4,688	4,864	5,438	5,704	5,036	5,222	5,435	5,356	-79
Guardianship	839	821	743	793	971	1,027	911	947	824	874	50
Adoption	913	834	830	781	800	809	710	698	715	505	-210
Paternity	1,511	1,791	1,344	1,429	1,344	1,279	1,167	1,289	1,110	1,037	-73
Mental Illness	2,133	2,336	2,372	2,165	2,329	2,353	2,493	3,072	3,434	3,794	360
Juvenile At-Risk Youth and Child-in-Need-of-Service	488	526	423	426	404	400	365	437	317	233	-84
Juvenile Dependency/Termination	1,549	1,297	766	849	1,035	909	1,571	1,170	1,133	1,045	-88
Juvenile Truancy ⁽²⁾	2,407	2,149	1,412	1,856	2,293	2,828	2,725	2,211	1,765	1,135	-630
Juvenile Offender	5,073	4,662	3,766	3,958	3,699	3,525	3,252	3,471	2,645	2,150	-495
Criminal RALJ	349	304	260	268	238	226	198	218	187	186	-1
Civil RALJ	108	137	104	112	89	96	79	76	53	55	2
Total	76,830	76,670	75,765	74,235	76,972	77,162	77,158	77,605	75,451	70,411	-2,154

(1) The statistics in this table include "Civil Matters Filed with Clerk", which are reported separately in the quarterly report. "Civil Matters Filed with Clerk" consist of those civil cases that require no or little judicial resources. This category includes the following cause codes of civil actions: Abstract of Judgment, Foreign Judgment, Tax Warrant, and Transcript of Judgment.

(2) Juvenile truancy filing became mandated on 10/1/1995.

Table 3. Year-end Pending Caseload

Category	Year-end Pending Caseload ⁽²⁾										2011-2012 ⁽³⁾
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Change
Criminal	2,884	3,377	3,227	3,828	4,154	3,338	2,582	2,791	2,549	2,780	231
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	11,902	11,838	9,625	8,941	8,719	9,262	11,299	9,969	9,238	8,507	-731
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Domestic	3,690	3,695	3,698	3,641	3,773	4,084	4,375	4,453	4,421	4,458	37
Probate	859	821	915	1,082	994	621	635	579	559	615	56
Guardianship	519	525	552	617	512	380	304	248	261	248	-13
Adoption	331	374	394	365	288	253	225	215	192	199	7
Paternity	901	624	689	468	558	442	523	436	377	500	123
Mental Illness	158	123	92	136	209	301	465	463	530	311	-219
Juvenile At-Risk Youth and Child-in-Need-of-Service	247	98	83	69	100	150	153	68	94	104	10
Juvenile Dependency/Termination	550	330	457	557	620	853	424	446	522	516	-6
Juvenile Truancy	1,518	938	1,224	1,339	1,327	1,529	690	313	165	308	143
Juvenile Offender	1,071	1,045	1,116	889	1,059	875	1,091	913	723	663	-60
Criminal RALJ	246	204	230	207	195	187	171	126	132	142	10
Civil RALJ	81	56	71	49	58	34	42	31	34	45	11
Total	24,967	24,050	22,373	22,188	22,566	22,309	22,979	21,051	19,797	19,396	-401

(1) The statistics in this table include “Civil Matters Filed with Clerk”, which are reported separately in the quarterly report. “Civil Matters Filed with Clerk” consist of those civil cases that require no or little judicial resources. This category includes the following cause codes of civil actions: Abstract of Judgment, Foreign Judgment, Tax Warrant, and Transcript of Judgment.

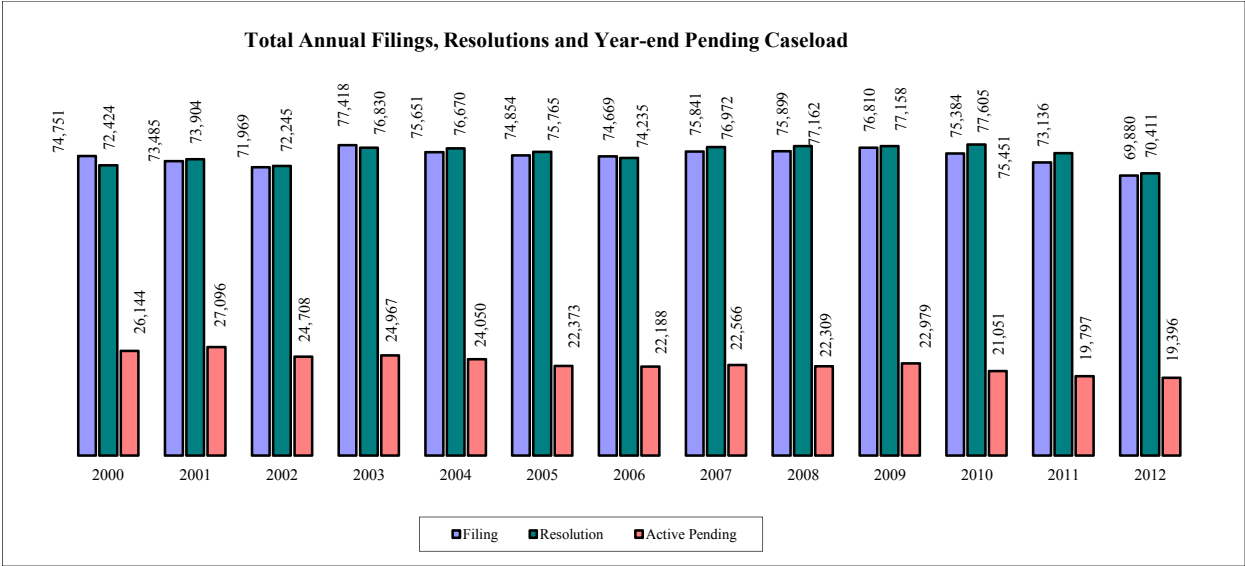
(2) Pending caseload does not include cases on suspense status.

(3) The percentage should be interpreted along with the number of cases. For those categories with small numbers, a large percentage does not necessarily indicate potential problem.

Table 4. Statistics by Location (SEA vs. MRJC)

Category	2012 Filings			2012 Resolutions			2012 Year-end Pending Caseload		
	MRJC (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)	MRJC (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)	MRJC (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)
Criminal	43%	57%	5,942	43%	57%	5,594	49%	51%	2,780
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	43%	57%	24,513	42%	58%	25,688	30%	70%	8,507
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	42%	58%	15,046	42%	58%	15,046	NA	NA	0
Domestic	37%	63%	7,678	38%	62%	7,713	39%	61%	4,458
Probate	22%	78%	5,492	22%	78%	5,356	15%	85%	615
Guardianship	39%	61%	879	38%	62%	874	40%	60%	248
Adoption	23%	77%	511	23%	77%	505	24%	76%	199
Paternity	51%	49%	1,161	52%	48%	1,037	51%	49%	500
Mental Illness	0%	100%	3,591	0%	100%	3,794	0%	100%	311
Juvenile At-Risk Youth and Child-in-Need-of-Service	52%	48%	242	56%	44%	233	29%	71%	104
Juvenile Dependency/Termination	45%	55%	1,050	49%	51%	1,045	37%	63%	516
Juvenile Truancy ⁽²⁾	55%	45%	1,271	59%	41%	1,135	36%	64%	308
Juvenile Offender	0%	100%	2,249	0%	100%	2,150	0%	100%	663
Criminal RALJ	6%	94%	192	8%	92%	186	7%	93%	142
Civil RALJ	18%	82%	63	42%	58%	55	11%	89%	45
Total	37%	67%	69,880	37%	63%	70,411	34%	66%	19,396

(1) The statistics in this table include “Civil Matters Filed with Clerk”, which are reported separately in the quarterly report. “Civil Matters Filed with Clerk” consists of those civil cases that require little or no judicial resources. This category includes the following cause codes of civil actions: Abstract of Judgment, Foreign Judgment, Tax Warrant, and Transcript of Judgment.



Appendix Definition

Active Status

A case is active if it is not on suspense status (see Suspense Status).

Adoption Cases

This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 5:

- Relinquishment (REL)
- Termination of Parent/Child Relationship (TER)
- Adoption (ADP)
- Miscellaneous (MSC)
- Name Change - Confidential (CHN)
- Initial Pre-Placement Report Filed with Clerk (PPR)

Annual Filings

Total number of new case filings during the calendar year (January 1 to December 31).

ANTRIAL

An “Assigned - No Trial” is a trial that has pre-trial motion time (PTM) and possibly voir dire time (VDT), but the trial was ended by plea, settlement or other dispositions before the opening statement or the impanel of a jury.

Case

A case is defined as a filing with an assigned case number (or a case number plus a defendant connection code in pre-1990 criminal filings).

Civil Cases (excl. RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)

Civil cases, excluding appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction and “Matters Filed with Clerk”. Civil cases include small claims as identified by the “Small Claim Track”. This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 2:

- Administrative Law Review (ALR)
- Change of Name - Non-Confidential (CHN)
- Collection (COL)
- Commercial (COM)
- Condemnation (CON)
- Appeals of Department of Licensing Revocation (DOC)
- Domestic Violence Protection (DVP)
- Emancipation of Minor (EOM)
- Foreclosure (FOR)
- Civil Harassment (HAR)
- Injunction (INJ)
- Other Malpractice (MAL)
- Medical Malpractice (MED)
- Meretricious Relationship (MER)
- Malicious Harassment (MHA)
- Miscellaneous (MSC)
- Minor Settlement (MST) - *as of 10/1/96, under Guardianship*
- Petition of Civil Commitment- Sexual Predator (PCC)
- Property Fairness (PFA)
- Personal Injury (PIN)
- Property Damage (PRP)
- Quiet Title (QTI)
- Small Claims (LCA/LCI on “Small Claim Track”)
- Seizure of Property from the Commission of a Crime (SPC)
- Seizure of Property Resulting from a Crime (SPR)
- Tort Motor Vehicle (TMV)
- Tort Other (TTO)
- Unlawful Detainer (UND)
- Wrongful Death (WDE)
- Writ of Habeas Corpus (WHC)
- Miscellaneous Writ (WMW)
- Writ of Mandamus (WRM)
- Writ of Restitution (WRR)
- Writ of Review (WRV)

Civil Matters Filed with Clerk

Filings with clerk (case numbers assigned), but requiring little or no judicial action. This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 2:

- Abstract of Judgment (ABJ)
- Foreign Judgment (FJU)
- Tax Warrant (TAX)
- Transcripts of Judgment (TRJ)

Civil RALJ Cases

Civil appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction (excluding small claims as identified by the “Small Claim Track”). Civil RALJ includes the following “cause-of-action” reporting categories:

- Lower Court Appeal - Civil and “Not a Small Claim”
- Lower Court Appeal - Infraction and “Not a Small Claim”

Note: The Civil RALJ cases are determined based on both SCOMIS “cause-of-action” code (LCA and LCI) within SCOMIS case type 2 and the “Small Claim Track”.

Completion

A case is completed when dispositive document is filed with the court following resolution.

Criminal Cases (excl. RALJ)

Adult criminal cases, excluding appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction. This reporting category includes the following crime categories within SCOMIS case type 1:

- Homicide
- Sex Crime
- Robbery
- Assault
- Theft/Burglary
- Motor Vehicle Theft
- Controlled Substance
- Other Felony
- Others (Misdemeanor, Non-charge Case)

Criminal RALJ Cases

Criminal appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction. This reporting category includes all SCOMIS case type 1 cases that have an appeal from lower court field of “Yes”.

Domestic Cases

This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 3:

- Child Custody (CUS)
- Dissolution with Children (DIC)
- Dissolution without Children (DIN)
- Foreign Judgment (FJU)
- Annulment/Invalidity (INV)
- Modification (with a new case number) (MOD)
- Miscellaneous (MSC)
- Mandatory Wage Assignment (MWA)
- Out-of-State Child Custody (OSC)
- Reciprocal, Respondent-in-County (RIC)
- Reciprocal, Respondent-out-of-County (ROC)
- Legal Separation (SEP)

Guardianship Cases

This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 4:

- Guardianship/Estate (G/E)
- Guardianship (GND)
- Limited Guardianship (LGD)
- Minor Settlement (MST)

Jury Trial

A hearing is reported as a jury trial if the jury is impaneled.

Juvenile At-risk Youth/Child-in-Need of Service Cases

Juvenile dependency cases, excluding truancy cases. This reporting category includes following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 7:

- Alternative Residential Placement (ARP)
- At-Risk Youth (ARY)
- Child in Need of Service (CNS)

Juvenile Dependency Cases

Juvenile dependency cases, excluding truancy cases. This reporting category includes following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 7:

- Dependency (DEP)
- Termination (TER)

Juvenile Offender Cases

This reporting category includes the following crime categories in SCOMIS case type 8:

- Homicide
- Sex Crime
- Robbery
- Assault
- Theft/Burglary
- Motor Vehicle Theft
- Controlled Substance
- Other Felony
- Others (Misdemeanor, Non-charge Case)

Juvenile Truancy Cases

Mandatory truancy filings started on 10/01/1995. This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” code within SCOMIS case type 7:

- Truancy (TRU)

Mental Illness Cases

This reporting category includes all “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 6:

- Alcoholic Treatment (ALT)
- Mental Illness - Adult (MI)
- Mental Illness - Juvenile (MIJ)

Non-Jury Trial

A hearing is reported as a non-jury trial if an opening statement is made, waived, or reserved.

Number of Trials

Occurrences of trials. If a case has multiple trials, all trials are reported. If multiple cases are tried together, it is reported as one trial where possible (see “Number of Cases Tried” for difference). The number of trials refer to number of jury and non-jury trials (including juvenile fact-findings).

Paternity Cases

This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 5:

- Modification (MOD)
- Paternity (PAT)
- Paternity/URESA/UIFSA (PUR)

Pending Case

A case is defined as pending if it is unresolved and active (not in suspense).

Post-disposition Modifications

Petitions to modify parenting plan and/or support after the resolution of the original cases, based on the modification tracks opened during the reporting period.

Probate Cases

This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 4:

- Absentee (ABS)
- Disclaimer (DSC)
- Estate (EST)
- Foreign Will (FNW)
- Miscellaneous (MSC)
- Non-Probate Notice to Creditors (NNC)
- Will Only (WLL)

Resolution

A case is resolved if all issues in the complaint are fully adjudicated.

Suspended Case

A case is placed in suspense status from active status during the reporting period.

Suspense Status

A case is on suspense status if it is on warrant, appeal, stay, mediation, arbitration (“Deferred Prosecution” is not a suspense status, but is treated as a resolution).

Trial

A hearing set before a judge or jury in which all the issues in the case are meant to be resolved. A trial normally includes opening statements to the court or jury stating what evidence will show, introduction of witnesses and exhibits for direct and cross examination, final arguments to the court or jury in which counsel argue both the evidence and the law, and judgment by the court or jury stating what the facts of the case are and what law applies to the facts. In a jury case, it also includes the selection of the jury. A trial can be held for one or more cases. A single trial may be held to adjudicate more than one case (as defined above).