

King County Superior Court
2014 Annual Statistical Report

Department of Judicial Administration
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Report #: YR-2014

2014 Highlights

This 2014 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 2014 was lower than that in 2013 (-3.1%). In 2014, the total filings (including “Matters Filed with Clerk”) were 64,464 cases. However, the change in filings was non-uniform across filing categories. In 2014, criminal filings continued to be low, higher than the level of 2013. The criminal filings (excluding criminal appeals) were 6,213 cases in 2014, showing an increase of 2.8% from 2013. General civil filings (case type 2, excluding Clerk’s filings and civil RALJ) decreased by 992 cases, or -4.4% from 2013. Domestic filings (case type 4) in 2014 showed no change from 2013, with an increase of only 24 cases. Mental Illness filings increased again in 2014, totaling 3,852 cases (+4.7%). Significant decrease in filings was observed in paternity (-24.6%) in 2014 when compared with previous year. Filing increase was noticeable in juvenile dependency/termination (+14.4%) and juvenile ARY/CHINS (+40.4%). Juvenile offender filings remained at a historical low level and showed no change from 2013, totaling 1802 cases in 2014. In addition, there were 1,943 post-disposition modifications in the domestic and paternity cases in 2014.
- **Resolutions** (Table 2). The total resolutions (including “Matters Filed with Clerk”) in 2014 were 64,749 cases, a 4% decrease from 2013. The total resolutions exceeded the total filings for general civil and paternity cases in 2014. However, the resolution pace was slightly behind the filing pace in both criminal and juvenile offender categories. No significant gap between the filings and resolutions was observed for other categories in 2014.
- **Pending Caseload** (Table 3). The overall pending caseload at the end of 2014 was 18,811 cases, almost identical to that at the end of 2013 (+0.1%). Increase in pending caseload was observed in probate (+18.2%), juvenile dependency/termination (+26%), juvenile ARY/CHINS (+26.6%) and juvenile offender (+10.6%) in 2014. Pending caseload in general civil (-9.9%) and paternity (-32.7%) decreased from a year ago. No significant change was seen in the pending caseload in any other categories.
- **Trials**. Overall, there were 402 jury trials in 2014. There were 607 non-jury trials and 784 juvenile fact-findings in 2014. In addition, there were 364 trials by affidavits and stipulated trials in 2014. These numbers showed little change except fact-findings in all juvenile categories.
- **MRJC vs. SEA** (Table 4). Of the total 64,464 cases (including Matters filed with the Clerk) filed in 2014, 37% were MRJC cases. However, no cases in the following categories were assigned to MRJC: mental illness and juvenile offender. The MRJC resolutions (37%, as a percentage of total resolution in KCSC) in 2014 were the same as the filings at MRJC (37%). At the end of 2014, the MRJC pending caseload was 36% of that of the entire court, including all case categories. In 2014, filings at MRJC in criminal, civil and domestic cases were 47%, 44% and 38% respectively. At the end of 2014, MRJC has more pending criminal cases than Seattle location (51% vs 49%).

Table 1. Annual Filings

Category	Annual Filings										2013-2014 Change (%)
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Criminal	9,901	10,648	10,767	8,667	6,498	6,691	5,986	5,942	6,045	6,213	168
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	26,915	25,469	26,020	27,577	29,821	27,632	27,542	24,513	22,410	21,418	-992
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	12,332	12,536	12,784	13,881	14,662	15,586	14,799	15,046	13,763	12,240	-1,523
Domestic	7,837	7,750	7,720	7,254	7,673	7,850	7,865	7,678	7,897	7,921	24
Probate	4,876	5,136	5,363	5,373	5,110	5,203	5,417	5,492	5,844	5,920	76
Guardianship	831	875	885	901	841	893	837	879	884	928	44
Adoption	846	751	717	772	685	686	688	511	483	470	-13
Paternity	1,394	1,199	1,421	1,147	1,233	1,189	1,039	1,161	931	702	-229
Mental Illness	2,342	2,225	2,397	2,420	2,727	3,059	3,506	3,591	3,678	3,852	174
Juvenile At-Risk Youth and Child-in-Need-of-Service	399	413	411	417	341	347	303	242	203	285	82
Juvenile Dependency/Termination	887	945	971	888	903	1,038	1,060	1,050	1,102	1,261	159
Juvenile Truancy ⁽²⁾	1,803	2,204	2,111	2,512	2,083	1,614	1,350	1,271	1,236	1,233	-3
Juvenile Offender	4,085	4,178	3,954	3,803	3,967	3,356	2,496	2,249	1,808	1,802	-6
Criminal RALJ	287	247	225	214	180	176	191	192	181	172	-9
Civil RALJ	119	93	95	73	86	64	57	63	53	47	-6
Total	74,854	74,669	75,841	75,899	76,810	75,384	73,136	69,880	66,518	64,464	-2,054
Post-disposition Modifications (domestic/paternity)	1,838	1,812	1,761	1,820	2,005	1,964	2,018	1,972	1,962	1,943	-19

(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										2013-2014 Change (%)
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Criminal	9,478	9,937	11,051	9,619	7,644	6,521	6,285	5,594	5,832	6,002	170
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	29,556	26,436	26,792	27,293	28,815	28,902	28,797	25,688	23,506	22,551	-955
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	12,334	12,536	12,784	13,900	14,662	15,590	14,799	15,046	13,763	12,240	-1,523
Domestic	7,689	7,825	7,705	7,194	7,530	7,781	7,952	7,713	7,915	7,861	-54
Probate	4,688	4,864	5,438	5,704	5,036	5,222	5,435	5,356	5,770	5,842	72
Guardianship	743	793	971	1,027	911	947	824	874	847	948	101
Adoption	830	781	800	809	710	698	715	505	520	486	-34
Paternity	1,344	1,429	1,344	1,279	1,167	1,289	1,110	1,037	988	861	-127
Mental Illness	2,372	2,165	2,329	2,353	2,493	3,072	3,434	3,794	3,887	3,836	-51
Juvenile At-Risk Youth and Child-in-Need-of-Service	423	426	404	400	365	437	317	233	233	272	39
Juvenile Dependency/Termination	766	849	1,035	909	1,571	1,170	1,133	1,045	1,197	1,203	6
Juvenile Truancy ⁽²⁾	1,412	1,856	2,293	2,828	2,725	2,211	1,765	1,135	1,187	813	-374
Juvenile Offender	3,766	3,958	3,699	3,525	3,252	3,471	2,645	2,150	1,738	1,616	-122
Criminal RALJ	260	268	238	226	198	218	187	186	179	161	-18
Civil RALJ	104	112	89	96	79	76	53	55	60	57	-3
Total	75,765	74,235	76,972	77,162	77,158	77,605	75,451	70,411	67,622	64,749	-2,873

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

Table 3. Year-end Pending Caseload

Category	Year-end Pending Caseload ⁽²⁾										2013-2014 ⁽³⁾
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Change
Criminal	3,227	3,828	4,154	3,338	2,582	2,791	2,549	2,780	2,865	2,866	1
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	9,625	8,941	8,719	9,262	11,299	9,969	9,238	8,507	7,936	7,148	-788
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Domestic	3,698	3,641	3,773	4,084	4,375	4,453	4,421	4,458	4,486	4,579	93
Probate	915	1,082	994	621	635	579	559	615	768	908	140
Guardianship	552	617	512	380	304	248	261	248	303	301	-2
Adoption	394	365	288	253	225	215	192	199	166	149	-17
Paternity	689	468	558	442	523	436	377	500	446	300	-146
Mental Illness	92	136	209	301	465	463	530	311	104	121	17
Juvenile At-Risk Youth and Child-in-Need-of-Service	83	69	100	150	153	68	94	104	94	119	25
Juvenile Dependency/Termination	457	557	620	853	424	446	522	516	507	639	132
Juvenile Truancy	1,224	1,339	1,327	1,529	690	313	165	308	326	821	495
Juvenile Offender	1,116	889	1,059	875	1,091	913	723	663	612	677	65
Criminal RALJ	230	207	195	187	171	126	132	142	143	155	12
Civil RALJ	71	49	58	34	42	31	34	45	38	28	-10
Total	22,373	22,188	22,566	22,309	22,979	21,051	19,797	19,396	18,794	18,811	17

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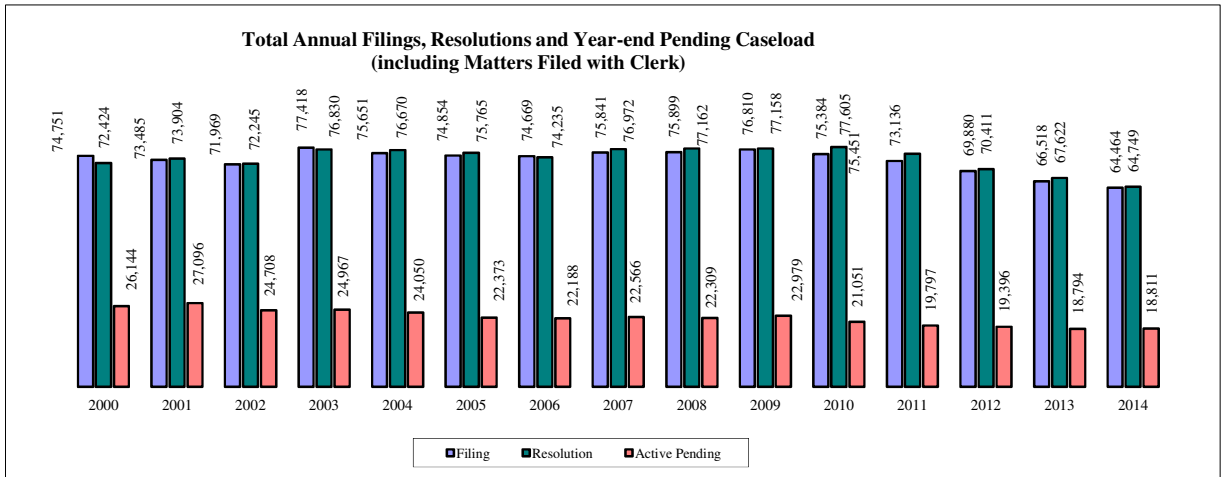
(2) Pending caseload does not include cases on suspense status.

(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	2014 Filings			2014 Resolutions			2014 Year-end Pending Caseload		
	MRJC (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)	MRJC (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)	MRJC (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)
Criminal	47%	53%	6,002	43%	57%	6,002	51%	49%	2,866
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	44%	56%	22,551	43%	57%	22,551	33%	67%	7,148
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	41%	59%	12240	41%	59%	12240	----	---	0
Domestic	38%	62%	7,861	38%	62%	7,861	38%	62%	4,579
Probate	24%	76%	5,842	24%	76%	5,842	18%	82%	908
Guardianship	38%	62%	948	37%	63%	948	38%	62%	301
Adoption	23%	77%	486	21%	79%	486	26%	74%	149
Paternity	53%	47%	861	56%	44%	861	41%	59%	300
Mental Illness	---	100%	3,836	---	100%	3,836	---	100%	121
Juvenile At-Risk Youth and Child-in-Need-of-Service	51%	49%	272	50%	50%	272	36%	64%	119
Juvenile Dependency/Termination	50%	50%	1,203	55%	45%	1,203	45%	55%	639
Juvenile Truancy ⁽²⁾	47%	53%	813	60%	40%	813	41%	59%	821
Juvenile Offender	---	100%	1,616	---	100%	1,616	---	100%	677
Criminal RALJ	7%	93%	161	8%	92%	161	8%	92%	155
Civil RALJ	11%	89%	57	9%	91%	57	11%	89%	28
Total	37%	63%	64,749	37%	63%	64,749	36%	64%	18,811

(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)
- Other cases (excl. DEP/TER /ARY/CNS/ARP)

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/URES/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).