

KING COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

2002 ANNUAL REPORT

A Message from Presiding Judge Richard D. Eadie

A Message from Chief Administrative Officer Paul L. Sherfey

King County Superior Court Mission Statement

To serve the public by ensuring justice through accessible and effective forums for the fair, just, understandable, and timely resolution of legal matters

King County Superior Court is a general jurisdiction trial court with responsibility for:

- ◆ Civil matters involving more than \$300, unlawful detainers, and injunctions;
- ◆ Felony criminal cases;
- ◆ Misdemeanor criminal cases not otherwise provided for by law;
- ◆ Family law, including dissolutions, child support, adoptions, parentage, and domestic violence protection matters;
- ◆ Probate and guardianship matters;
- ◆ Juvenile offender cases;
- ◆ Juvenile dependencies, including abused and neglected children, children in need of services, at-risk youth, and truancies;
- ◆ Mental illness and involuntary commitment matters.

King County Superior Court:

- ◆ Is the largest of the 30 superior court districts in Washington State.
- ◆ Handles a caseload of over 60,000 new cases per year.
- ◆ Operates at five sites, including the King County Courthouse, Juvenile Court, and mental illness court at Seattle locations, the Regional Justice Center in Kent, and an Ex Parte calendar at Bellevue District Court.
- ◆ Has 51 judges and 11 commissioners
- ◆ Is supported by ??? Superior Court staff and ??? staff in the Department of Judicial Administration

In 2002, the Court handled 60,769 new cases, including:

- ◆ 9,306 criminal cases
- ◆ 22,272 general civil cases
- ◆ 12,023 domestic civil cases
- ◆ 6,567 probate and guardianship cases
- ◆ 5,208 juvenile offender cases
- ◆ 3,325 juvenile dependency cases
- ◆ 2,068 mental illness cases

JUDGES

Judges of the King County Superior Court serving as of December 2002 appear below. The year appointed (A) or elected (E) to the bench is shown in parentheses.

Anthony P. Wartnik (1980, A)
George T. Mattson (1981, A)
Donald D. Haley (1983, A)
Sharon Armstrong (1985, A)
Steven Scott (1988, A)
Michael J. Fox (1988, A)
J. Kathleen Learned (1988, E)
Dale B. Ramerman (1989, E)
Carol A. Schapira (1989, E)
William L. Downing (1989, A)
Joan E. DuBuque (1989, A)
LeRoy McCullough (1989, A)
Robert Alsdorf (1990, A)
Ann Schindler (1991, A)
Charles W. Mertel (1992, A)
Deborah D. Fleck (1992, A)
Laura C. Inveen (1992, A)
Michael C. Hayden (1992, E)
Brian D. Gain (1993, E)
Michael S. Spearman (1993, E)
Richard A. Jones (1994, A)
Linda Lau (1995, A)
Richard D. Eadie (1995, A)
Nicole K. MacInnes (1995, A)
Michael J. Trickey (1996, A)
Glenna S. Hall (1996, A)
Jeffrey M. Ramsdell (1996, E)
Philip G. Hubbard, Jr. (1996, E)
Suzanne M. Barnett (1996, E)
Jay V. White (1996, E)
Patricia H. Clark (1998, A)
Dean S. Lum (1998, A)
Ronald Kessler (1999, A)
Terence P. Lukens (1999, A)
Palmer Robinson (1999, A)
Helen Halpert (1999, A)
James Doerty (1999, A)
Richard McDermott (2000, A)
Julie Spector (2000, A)
Mary Yu (2000, A)
Bruce W. Hilyer (2000, A)
James D. Cayce (2000, A)
Michael J. Heavey (2000, E)
Douglass A. North (2000, E)
Catherine Shaffer (2000, E)
Douglas D. McBroom (2000, A)
Gregory Canova (2001, E)
Cheryl Carey (2001, A)
John Erlick (2001, E)
Laura Gene Middaugh (2001, E)
Paris K. Kallas (2001, A)

COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners of the King County Superior Court who served during 2002 are listed below. Their year appointed is shown in parentheses.

Stephen M. Gaddis (1981)
Carlos Y. Velategui (1986)
Bonnie Canada-Thurston (1993)
Kimberley D. Prochnau (1994)
Eric B. Watness (1995)
Hollis Holman (1996)
Nancy Bradburn-Johnson (1998)
Leonid Ponomarchuk (1998)
Marilyn Sellers (1998)
Richard Gallaher (2000)

* Judges who left the Court in 2000.

King County Drug Diversion Court was the twelfth drug court in the country when implemented in 1994, and has served as a mentor to more than 700 drug courts operating across the nation. Drug Court is a pre-sentencing program that provides eligible defendants the opportunity to receive drug treatment in lieu of incarceration. Participants receive treatment, undergo random urinalysis, and appear before the Drug Court judge on a regular basis. Defendants who meet the requirements of each level of Drug Court graduate from the program and the charges are dismissed. Those who fail to make progress are terminated from the program and sentenced on their original charge. The program accepts cases in which a defendant has been arrested on felony drug possession and solicitation charges and has no prior adult convictions for sex or violent offenses. Since the program's inception, 2,145 defendants have entered treatment and 550 have graduated. In 2002, 194 defendants entered the program and 96 graduated.

Mandatory Arbitration provides an equitable, less expensive and faster means of resolving civil disputes while reducing court congestion, case processing costs, and litigants' expenses. Implemented in October 1980, the program was initially limited to civil cases involving monetary judgments of less than \$10,000. This limit has been raised several times and now reaches \$35,000 per claim. Beginning in 2002, arbitration is mandated in Washington counties with populations over 150,000 and filing fees are dedicated for this service. 1,732 cases were resolved by arbitration in 2002.

Interpreter Services has assisted people with interpreters at the downtown courthouse, Regional Justice Center, and Juvenile Court since 1992. The staff of six, including two court-certified Spanish interpreters, is responsible for scheduling interpreters for all foreign spoken languages and American Sign Language for hearings, trials and court-related programs in criminal, civil and family law matters. As the number of languages serviced has grown to more than 100, the number of interpreters associated with the office is more than 240.

The Guardianship and Probate Facilitator Program was launched in August 1999 to help pro se litigants understand court requirements for guardianship and probate matters and navigate the system in a timely and effective manner. Staff provides information about relevant statutes and court procedures, gives clear instructions for completing required forms, and reviews documents prior to submittal to the court. The Court also has 40 Guardianship-Probate volunteer attorneys and paralegals available four days per week to help guardians and estate representatives resolve delinquent cases or bring them into compliance with court requirements.

Family Court/Adoption Services was established in 1950 to assist the court in making decisions regarding the best interests of children in family law cases and to provide parent education, mediation, and evaluation services to resolve cases outside of court. The Family Court Services staff consists of a social work team that has extensive experience and education in childhood development and an array of issues that confront today's families, including domestic violence, chemical dependency, child abuse, and mental illness. In 2002, the program processed nearly 2,400 family law referrals and screened close to 950 adoption calendars. More than 1,500 parents attended the mandatory family law seminar and nearly 1,350 children (78% under the age of 12) benefited from services.

The Family Law Facilitator Program, established in 1993, provides procedural and referral information to pro se litigants, to help them prepare their case for a hearing before a commissioner or judge. Assistance in obtaining and understanding required forms and complying with local rules improves litigants' access to the court and reduces the time judges and commissioners spend on their cases. To further enhance services, in 1998 the Family Law Information Center was opened at the Regional Justice Center. In 2002, the Facilitator program served more than 4,500 walk-in clients and more than 3,000 ex-parte clients in both locations.

Unified Family Court (UFC) began as a pilot project at the Regional Justice Center in 1997. Through judicial management, the UFC program brings about comprehensive and effective resolution of complex Title 26 and Title 13 cases where minor children are at risk. Families with multiple or complicated court actions have the opportunity to have all matters resolved by one judicial officer. A case manager facilitates court process, monitors case progress, and connects families to support services. In 2002, the UFC model was expanded to the Seattle courthouse and the number of judges hearing these cases grew from two to five. Since the program's inception, the UFC has handled 616 family law/dependency actions involving children at risk. Additionally, in 2002 the UFC Training Oversight Committee provided nearly 60 continuing education seminars on an array of issues affecting families and children.

The Dependency Court Appointed Special Advocates (Dependency CASA) program trains volunteers to represent the best interests of abused and neglected children in juvenile dependency cases. Established in 1977, this program was the first of its kind and has served as a national model for involving community volunteers in court proceedings. Volunteers spend thousands of hours each year investigating cases, interviewing parties involved in cases, monitoring compliance with court orders, and attending court hearings. In 2002, 1,667 children were served by 405 volunteers.

JUDICIAL CASELOAD

2002 Case Filings

In 2002, the total number of cases filed with King County Superior Court was 60,769¹, about 4% lower than in 2001. Criminal filings were significantly lower (11.6%) than the previous year, whereas civil cases increased by % and were the highest in the Court's history. Family law cases continued a decade trend of decline, falling by % in 2002. Juvenile dependency cases declined significantly (37%) due to a large decrease in truancy filings. Juvenile offender filings remained nearly constant.

Case Type	2002 Filings	Change from 2001
Civil	22,272	6.0%
Criminal	9,306	-11.6%
Family Law	12,023	-4.1%
Probate	6,567	-1.8%
Juv. Dependency	3,325	-37%
Juvenile Offender	5,208	1.3%
Mental Illness	2,068	-3.7%
TOTAL	60,769	-4%

2002 Case Resolutions

The Court resolved a total of 60,942² cases in 2002, nearly equivalent to 2001 activity. Total resolutions were consistent with overall filings, and generally exceeded 2001 except for juvenile cases. The pending caseload at the end of 2002 was 24,384 cases, a decrease of 2,293 cases, or about 9%, from 2001.

Case Type	2002 Resolutions	Change from 2001
Civil	21,534	5.2%
Criminal	9,928	4.5%
Family Law	12,829	3.6%
Probate	6,437	4.4%
Juv. Dependency	3,155	-35.5%
Juvenile Offender	4,932	-10%
Mental Illness	2,127	4.4%
TOTAL	60,942	0%

2002 Criminal Caseload

	2002 Filings	Change from 2001
Homicide	61	-21.8%
Assault	1,303	-1.4%
Robbery	412	-13.4%
Burglary/Theft	1,914	-7.5%
Motor Vehicle	527	6.7%
Controlled Substance	3,135	-19.7%
Sex Crime	442	10%
Other	1,512	-15.1%
TOTAL	9,306	-11.6%

¹ An additional 10,779 civil matters were filed with the Superior Court Clerk.

² An additional 10,775 civil matters were resolved by the Superior Court Clerk.

2002 Trial Activity

	Jury Trial	Non-Jury Trial
Civil	190	273
Criminal	532	188
Domestic		890
Juvenile		
Dependency	0	1243
Juvenile Offender	0	342
Other		568
Total	725	3504

Superior Court Filing Trends 1998-2002

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Civil	19414	19325	20569	21005	22272
Criminal	9589	10130	10806	10526	9306
Family Law	14045	13673	13110	12538	12023
Probate	6478	6936	6798	6684	6567
Juvenile					
Dependency	5573	5266	5978	5277	3325
Juvenile					
Offender	8650	7419	6121	5142	5208
Mental Illness	1992	1916	1920	2148	2068
Total	65,741	64,665	65,302	63,320	60,769

BUDGET

2002 FUNDING

In 2002, King County Superior Court received a total of \$40,503,624 from county, state, and grant sources. The majority of the Court's funding (79.2%) came from King County. The State of Washington provided a total of \$2,022,865 (5%). A combination of federal, state and private grants provided a total of \$6,405,437 (15.8%).

2002 Funding by Source

County	\$32,075,322
State	\$2,022,865
Grants	\$6,405,437
Total	\$40,503,624

2002 EXPENDITURES

Operating costs include salaries for judges, bailiffs, court reporters and support staff, as well as payments to jurors and interpreters. Other expenditures were made in the following programs:

Civil: Family Court Services, Family Law Department, Family Law CASA, Mandatory Arbitration, and Family Law Facilitator programs.

Juvenile: Partnership for Youth Justice, Dependency CASA, truancy programs, juvenile court operations, and juvenile probation services

Administration: Executive staff, personnel, computer services, and support staff for payroll, purchasing, facilities, accounts payable and clerical services.

Unified Family Court: Case Manager for Unified Family Court and staff for the Family Law Information Center.

2002 Expenditures by Program Area

Criminal	23.6%
Juvenile	40.0%
Civil	26.5%
Administration	9.4%
Unified Family Court	0.5%

King County Courthouse

516 – 3rd Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104-2312
(206) 296-9100
fax (206) 296-0986
www.metrokc.gov/kcsc/

Regional Justice Center

401 – 4th Avenue North
Kent, WA 98032-4429
(206) 205-2501
fax (206) 205-2585

Juvenile Court

1211 East Alder
Seattle, WA 98122
(206) 205-9500
fax (206) 205-9432