

# Judge Johanna Bender

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Judge Bender was appointed to the King County Superior Court bench by Governor Inslee, and joined the court on December 1, 2015. She previously served as a King County District Court Judge from 2012-2015.

Judge Bender has considerable interest and expertise in partnerships between the legal system and behavioral health providers to maximize services for community members in crisis. While on the District Court bench, Judge Bender presided over the County's Regional Mental Health Court and Regional Veterans Court programs. She has co-chaired the County Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Oversight Committee, presided over the Superior Court Involuntary Treatment Act calendar, and co-chaired the Court's Involuntary Treatment Act Oversight Committee. She also presided over the 2021-2022 Recovery Pilot Project, a program that utilized therapeutic treatment court strategies to serve patients released from involuntary hospitalization into the community. She has taught statewide on the intersection between behavioral health and the law, and has testified often in Olympia on mental health policy matters.

A 1991 graduate of Brown University, Judge Bender was a domestic violence advocate at the Domestic Abuse Women's Network from 1992-1993. After graduating from the University of Washington School of Law in 1996, Judge Bender worked in the public and private sectors before taking the bench. She was a staff attorney at The Defender Association from 1996-2000, clerked for The Honorable Marsha J. Pechman, United States District Court Judge, from 2000-2002, and was an associate attorney at Gordon, Murray, Tilden LLP from 2002-2006. From 2006 until her appointment to District Court in 2012, Judge Bender served as a Pro Tem Judge throughout Western Washington.

Judge Bender serves on the Advisory Board for the Judicial Institute, a program dedicated to increasing diversity on the Washington State bench. An active contributor to efforts to increase access to justice in King County and across our state, Judge Bender was appointed by Governor Inslee as a Trustee of the Legal Foundation of Washington, serves on the Minority and Justice Commission, and has previously acted as liaison from the bench to the Statewide Access to Justice Board. Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Bender volunteered for many years for Legal Voice, a civil legal aid organization dedicated to advancing legal rights for women. Judge Bender is currently the Chief Judge at the Maleng Regional Justice Center, and has previously served as the Assistant Chief Criminal Judge for the Court.