



PIERCE COUNTY
SUPERIOR COURT

2017-2018
BIENNIAL REPORT

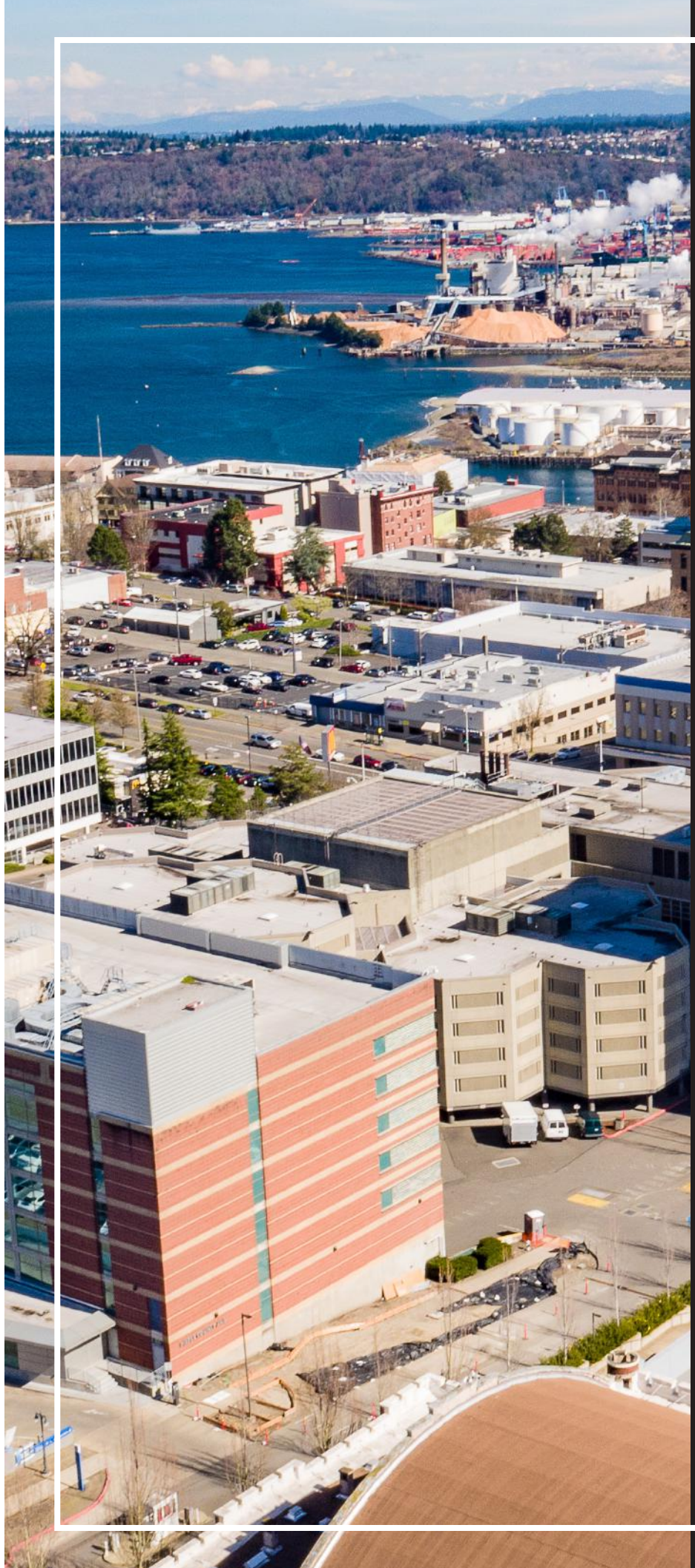


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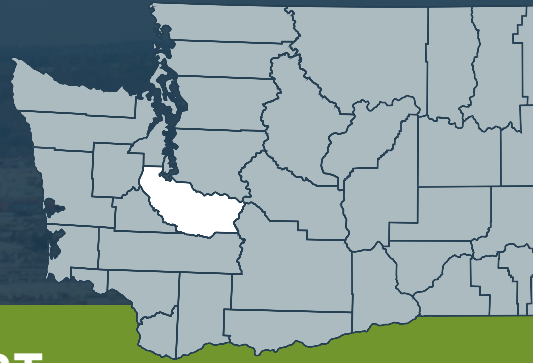
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PIERCE COUNTY POPULATION 876,764

*2017 ESTIMATE FROM US CENSUS



SUPERIOR COURT

is the second largest Superior Court in the State of Washington and is proud to serve the citizens and visitors of Pierce County. The Court is staffed with 22 Judges and 9 Commissioners. There are three sites where court is held; the County City Building at 930 Tacoma Ave S Tacoma, Remann Hall Juvenile Court at 5501 6th Ave Tacoma, and Western State Hospital at 9601 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood.



31 JUDICIAL OFFICERS



73 STAFF MEMBERS



34,322
Days Jurors
Reported
in 2018



3,503
DV Protection
Orders Filed
in 2018



680
Trials in
2018

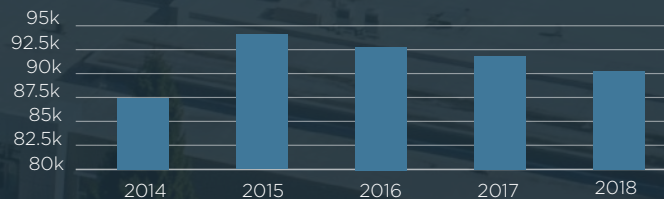


28,630 IN 2018
Cases Filed at the CCB

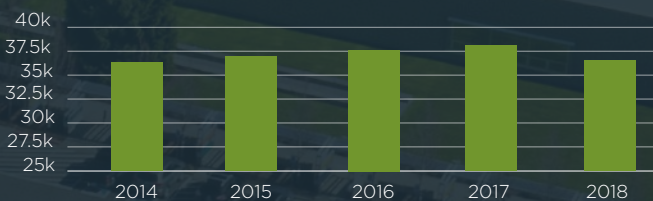


3,547 IN 2018
Cases Filed at Remann Hall

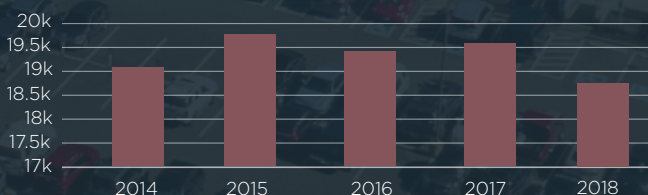
COUNTY CITY BUILDING (CCB) PROCEEDINGS - JUDGES ONLY



REMANN HALL PROCEEDINGS JUDGES AND COMMISSIONERS



CCB AND WESTERN STATE HOSPITAL COMMISSIONER - NON EX PARTE



PIERCE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

Judges are elected every four years, unless there is a vacancy due to retirement, which would be filled by the Governor until the next election cycle. The judges are pictured in numerical department order. Judicial staff are listed on the next page, also in numerical department order.





OUR MISSION

Actively manage the business of the court so as to provide for fair, prompt and efficient resolution of disputes.

Maintain independence and parity as an equal branch of government.

Provide due process and individual justice in each case.

JUDICIAL DEPARTMENTS

1

James Orlando

JA | Karen Ladenburg

CR | Shaun Linse

2

Tim Ashcraft

JA | Sandi Rutten

CR | Kellie Smith

3

Michael Schwartz

JA | Patti Wood

CR | Raelene Semago

4

Bryan Chushcoff

JA | Susan Winnie

CR | Katrina Smith

5

Shelly Speir

JA | Andrew Shanstrom

CR | Jennifer Flygare

6

Jack Nevin

JA | Iva Rockett

CR | Kathy Mahr

7

Jerry Costello

JA | Michelle Prichard

CR | Karla Thomas

8

Grant Blinn

JA | Kati Jamison

CR | Jan-Marie Glaze

9

Edmund Murphy

JA | Michelle van Antwerp

CR | Emily Dirton

10

Garold Johnson

JA | Linda Schramm

CR | Leslie Thompson

11

G. Helen Whitener

JA | Rasheeda McGoodwin

CR | Kim O'Neill

12

Stephanie Arend

JA | Dan Vessels

CR | Susan Ziehle

13

Kathryn Nelson

JA | Kristine Maine

CR | Dana Eby

14

Susan Serko

JA | Candy Augustin

CR | Lanre Adebayo

15

Gretchen Leanderson

JA | Heather Wynne

CR | Jamie Booker

16

Elizabeth Martin

JA | Angela Edwards

CR | Cathy Schamu

17

Karena Kirkendoll

JA | Ginele Eilert

CR | Kaedra Wakenshaw

18

Stanley Rumbaugh

JA | Brian Matson

CR | Carol Frederick

19

Phil Sorensen

JA | Monica Schmuck

CR | Sheri Schelbert

20

Kitty Ann van Doorninck

JA | Michele Tufts

CR | Carla Higgins

21

Frank Cuthbertson

JA | Ashley Lipford

CR | Tim Regis

22

John Hickman

JA | Connie Mangus

CR | Dianne Johnson

2017 -2018 PRESIDING JUDGE

ELIZABETH MARTIN



It has been my honor and privilege to serve as the Pierce County Superior Court Presiding Judge for the past two years. We truly have a wonderful bench of outstanding judicial officers and unparalleled support staff, each of whom makes a difference by their service. I want to publicly acknowledge and thank our administrative team led by our Court Administrator, Chris Gaddis, Deputy Court Administrator, Dea Finigan and Fiscal Manager, Dorene Caillier, who continue to enhance us as a court with their outstanding leadership and support.

2017 was a year of transition in judicial officers. The close of 2016 brought the retirements of Judge Vicky Hogan, Judge Ron Culpepper and Judge Kathryn Stolz. In March 2017, we also celebrated the well-earned retirement of Commissioner Mary Dicke. Collectively, along with Judge Brian Tollefson who retired in May 2016, we lost over 100 years of judicial experience, wisdom and institutional knowledge. As difficult as it was to absorb that loss, we also welcomed with joy four new judges and three new commissioners: Judge Grant Blinn, Judge Karena Kirkendoll, Judge Shelly Speir, Judge Timothy Ashcraft, Commissioner Barbara McInville, Commissioner Sabrina Ahrens and Commissioner Terri Farmer. Our newest judicial officers have enriched us with their energy, talent, creativity, passion and enthusiasm.

What happened in 2017-2018

In late 2017 we welcomed a newly added ninth commissioner position to our Superior Court family. We extend our gratitude to the Executive and to the County Council for supporting this additional critical resource. The addition of the ninth commissioner made it possible for us to expand our services for individuals seeking Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO). Pioneered by Commissioner Adams and Commissioner Lindsay, the DV Screener position, which was launched in January 2018, has become an integral part of our court's response to victims of domestic violence. Our county has long had the highest filings of DVPO petitions state-wide. With this additional resource, we are now able to provide face-to-face or telephonic contact for ex parte petitioners. This provides a more meaningful hearing and ensures that potential litigants are being directed appropriately.

As part of our ongoing focus on domestic violence issues, we have hosted regular meetings of an ad hoc DV task force to evaluate our utilization of kiosk filing for DVPO petitions, implement access through telephone and skype for remote petitioners to have personal contact with the court, develop protocols for the surrender of firearms and ensure compliance with firearm surrender orders issued in the civil DV arena. Together with our stakeholder partners, we remain fully committed to programs and resources which promote timely and effective access for DV victims and ensure due process for all litigants. In 2019, we hope to host a summit of elected officials and stakeholder partners within the DV and law enforcement communities as we continue to address the issue of firearm surrender orders and effective compliance.

Another strategic priority for the past two years has been our continued study of mental health issues within our court systems as we meet challenges within our community. We have partnered with community, health and governmental leaders in developing programs aimed at reducing or diverting persons with mental health issues from the criminal justice system.

We have enthusiastically supported the Trueblood grant initiatives aimed at diversion and post-release mental health resources. We have had regular dialogue with DSHS regarding issues at WSH surrounding criminal competency evaluation and restoration. We are also planning for the eventual release of civil residents at WSH into community based-resources, focusing on the court's expected role and infrastructure needs.



Pictured L to R; Judges Grant Blinn, Karena Kirkendoll, Shelly Speir and Tim Ashcraft during their swearing-in ceremony.

We will continue to advocate for adequate judicial resources to address behavioral health issues, both in our superior court and at Western State Hospital. Our Felony Mental Health Court has doubled its capacity to allow up to 80 active participants. We have now celebrated 34 graduates. Pioneered by Judge Ed Murphy and now led by Judge Frank Cuthbertson, our Felony Mental Health Court is recognized statewide as a model for successful therapeutic intervention in a felony setting.



The opioid epidemic and substance abuse within our community continues to challenge us as well. Our Felony Drug Court and Family Recovery Court, now well into their third decade, continue to make a difference one life at a time while addressing the particular challenges of heroin and methamphetamine addiction. 2017 brought the expansion of medical-assisted treatment (MAT) for therapeutic court participants, along with the introduction of substance abuse disorder treatment in our jail. In 2019, the Superior Court will add a therapeutic court supervisor to oversee both Drug Court and Mental Health Court programs, reflecting this Court's ongoing commitment to promoting alternatives to incarceration.

The prevalence of mental health and substance use disorder issues within our community has also had a huge impact on our dependency cases at Juvenile Court. Pierce County has the highest number of dependency cases in the State of Washington, yet we still consistently meet statutorily mandated timelines, due in no small part to the incredible group of committed judicial officers, social workers and CASA's, all working together toward permanency for children. Going forward, we will continue our partnership with community and governmental leaders to address the opiate crisis and its effect on

children, while advocating for additional judicial resources to meet this challenge.

Our court's commitment to the timely and efficient resolution of criminal cases remained a top priority throughout 2017 and 2018. Over the past two years, we have seen a decline in the number of pending criminal cases. We also achieved a reduction in our inventory of older cases. Led by Criminal Division Presiding Judge Stephanie Arend, who has been a courageous and innovative leader, we adopted criminal best practices designed to foster the timely resolution of criminal matters.

Our Court Administrator, Chris Gaddis, has been a leader on both a local and statewide level, studying our juror response rates and looking at the diversity of our juror pools. By identifying where our jurors come from—and where they don't respond—we hope to look at ways to expand our jury pools and encourage more citizens to respond to the summons for jury duty.

Mr. Gaddis has likewise been a leader in the area of courthouse security and emergency planning. One of the highlights of 2018 was an Active Shooter drill, involving all court personnel, along with personnel from other county departments

and law enforcement, who created a frighteningly realistic hostage/shooter scenario. Those who participated learned a lot about how we would (or should) respond in the case of actual emergency. A statewide study of courthouses revealed the shocking lack of security around the state. While we are fortunate in Pierce County to have the level of security we do, we understand the need to be vigilant in protecting the public and remain fierce advocates for the highest levels of security in our buildings. Our Superior Court is fully and passionately committed to continued advocacy aimed at ensuring our courthouse is a safe place for our employees and members of the public.

As I reflect back on my tenure as Presiding Judge, I will forever be inspired by the quiet and determined dedication of each my colleagues and our staff to the rule of law, the cause of justice and the prompt, fair resolution of disputes. It is our mission and one which we strive to live out each and every day.

Honorable Elizabeth P. Martin
2017-2018 Presiding Judge

2019-2020 PRESIDING JUDGE

GAROLD E. JOHNSON



CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

PCSC Presiding Judge 2019-20.

WA State Judicial College faculty member

PCSC Executive Committee Member since
1-1-2013

Past Chair of PCSC Commissioner Review
Committee

Past Chair of PCSC Family Law Committee

Past Chair of PCSC Civil Rules Committee

Appointed to PCSC April 2011

Attorney for 29 years prior to appointment to PCSC

Former City Prosecutor, City of Gig Harbor

Former Pro. Tem. Judge; Kitsap County District
Court, Port Orchard Municipal Court

Former private Arbitrator and Mediator

Former Probation Officer, Pierce County Juvenile
Court

Former Adjunct Professor University of Puget
Sound Law School

Former Adjunct Professor Fort Steilacoom
Community College



EDUCATION

Graduated Cum Laude University of Puget Sound
School of law.

Graduated from University of Puget Sound,
Bachelor of Arts - History

Graduated from Fort Steilacoom Community
College - AA

Graduated from Vashon High School, Vashon WA.

I would like to begin by thanking Judge Martin, the rest of the Pierce County Superior Court bench, and Superior Court personnel, including those at Remann Hall and Western State Hospital, for their extraordinary dedication and hard work over the past two years. There are more than 30,000 new cases filed with Pierce County Superior Court each year, with a 98% resolution rate. This is evidence of tremendous teamwork from judicial officers, staff, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Department of Assigned Counsel, Clerk's office, and all other persons and agencies that work with and for the court.



All Pierce County Superior Court judges and our personnel fully support the principal goal of the criminal justice system to protect society. When people commit felonies, incarceration remains a primary tool used to remove convicted offenders from the ability to threaten the security of the general population. However, the use of this tool, without other options, may not be effective and in some specific situations, may in fact be counterproductive.



Superior Court is committed to providing due process and individual justice in each case. Such a commitment cannot solely be upheld through incarceration of convicted offenders. This is especially true for juvenile offenders. Incarcerating juveniles is often counterproductive. Programs in Juvenile Court at Remann Hall use evidence-based practices to create meaningful interventions for youth who break the law. Consequently, at Remann Hall the role of Probation has evolved from one that traditionally focused on surveillance and compliance to a model that now assists with skill building and promotes connection to community so that our young people are better equipped to transition to adulthood.



For adults, there is growing recognition that drug addiction and/or serious diagnosed mental health issues can be factors leading to criminal behavior. This reality has motivated Pierce County Superior Court to develop and implement innovative programs to improve the lives of incarcerated individuals and hopefully keep them from re-offending, by addressing their underlying mental health or addiction problems. Pierce County uses a combination of Felony Drug Court, Family Recovery Court, Felony Mental Health Court and Assisted Outpatient Treatment Court to address these issues. Going forward, efforts will be made to increase the services provided in our Therapeutic Courts.



Superior Court is dedicated to providing outstanding service to the residents of Pierce County. We strive to be good stewards of the public's time, money and resources. Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the court and its programming. We look forward to providing you with another report at the end of my two-year tenure. In the meantime, make sure you follow Pierce County through our social media and websites, for updates on the court.

Honorable Garold E. Johnson
2019-2020 Presiding Judge Department 10

THERAPEUTIC COURTS

FELONY DRUG COURT, FAMILY RECOVERY COURT, FELONY MENTAL HEALTH COURT AND ASSISTED OUTPATIENT TREATMENT

1999

FAMILY RECOVERY

Family Recovery Court facilitates early intervention and treatment with a comprehensive approach to strengthening family functioning by focusing on emotional, developmental and physical needs of clients and their children. Parents participate in structured programs that include frequent court appearances, substance abuse treatment, drug testing, as well as training, education, parenting, and counseling. There have been **392** graduates since program inception.

2015

FMHC BEGAN

Pierce County Felony Mental Health Court is an 18 month program and requires participants:

- Have a diagnosed serious and persistent major mental illness;
- Demonstrate a likelihood they will benefit from treatment;
- Are competent, under RCW 10.77;
- Are charged with a felony in Pierce County Superior Court that does not involve the use of a firearm, is not a sex offense, and did not cause substantial or great bodily harm;
- Have a link between their charge and their mental health;
- Are Pierce County residents

2018

FMHC EXPANSION

In 2018, the funding partner Optum asked that FMHC expand from 40 participants to 80. This, along with the Assisted Outpatient Treatment docket, caused our part-time FMHC judge to move to a full five day mental health docket. As of early 2019, there were 57 active participants.

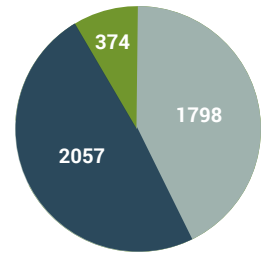
THERAPEUTIC COURT STAFFING

It takes an amazing group of people to keep our Therapeutic Courts running smoothly to provide the high level of service for the participants. There are **8** judges and staff in Superior Court, **3** from the Prosecutor's Office, **3** from Department of Assigned Counsel, **6** staff from Pierce County Alliance (Drug Court), **12** staff members for Greater Lakes Mental Health (FMHC) and **7** staff members from Comprehensive Mental Health (AOT), not to mention the other volunteers and alumni who support participants through their journey.

1994

FELONY DRUG COURT

The primary goal of the Pierce County Felony Drug Court is to reduce recidivism and the need for incarceration by offering an alternative to jail and probation through participation in assessment, education and treatment for nonviolent, drug- addicted defendants that will take a



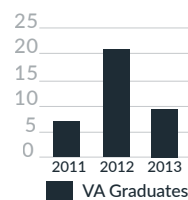
■ Terminations
■ Graduations
■ Opted Out

minimum of 12 months. Pierce County Drug Court has successfully graduated over 1800 participants who have gone on to live healthy and crime free lives.

2010

VETERANS TRACK

In 2010 Pierce County Superior Court along with Pierce County Alliance received a three-year grant to serve veterans who suffer from substance use disorders. The grant provided funding for 50 veterans who were charged with a non-violent felony. Due to federal funding the grant is no longer available. Pierce County Alliance continues



to provide treatment services to veterans within our Felony Drug Court and the Pierce County Veterans Bureau. The program has served over 100 veterans and has had over 50 graduates since 2010.

2017

1ST FMHC GRADUATE

In 2017 FMHC court has their first graduate. Since then, FMHC has seen the graduations of 35 participants. Participants have a 98% court attendance rate in FMHC.

2018

AOT COURT

Current involuntary treatment laws are restrictive regarding when an individual can be hospitalized due to increased symptoms. The result is that many individuals must decompensate to the point of being a danger before they can be successfully detained. Assisted Outpatient Treatment court tries to contact these individuals before they have to be hospitalized and engage them in court ordered services in hopes of returning them to baseline functioning. The majority of the costs for the AOT court are provided by Beacon Health Options through a grant.



2019 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

STRATEGIC PLANNING ENSURES THE COURT IS PURPOSEFUL IN ADAPTING TO CHANGES IN THE LAW, THE NEEDS OF ITS CONSTITUENTS, AND PROVIDING APPROPRIATE RESOURCES TO ENSURE THE TIMELY RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES.

ENHANCING THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE



- Seek general fund support for coordination, management and possible expansion of Therapeutic Courts.
- Seek funding for additional judicial resources, including 23rd judge.
- Comprehensive review of interpreter pay.
- Seek Trueblood funding for AOBHT and OCRP hearings.
- Comprehensive review of dependency dockets to achieve efficiencies.
- Reclassification of the Family Law Case Technician to a Family Court Services Coordinator.
- Stakeholder meeting with Pierce County Law Enforcement and other stakeholders about firearm surrender in the context of domestic violence.
- Advocate for additional Commissioner Services Department staff to assist with Domestic Violence Protection Order docket.
- Seek grants to improve the courts response to Domestic Violence issues.
- Evaluate use of existing human and technology resources within Superior Court to determine viability of savings to be utilized for other court priorities.
- Bring PCSC COOP plan in line with Pierce County OEM standards.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE: ENSURING IMPARTIALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY



- Specialty Court presentations to Council.
- Investigate using a "secret shopper" program to review the Court's effectiveness.
- Survey jurors on their experience during the court process.

IMPROVING COURT FACILITIES



- Continue persistent advocacy for upgraded/expanded Superior Court and Juvenile Court facilities and co-location of Juvenile Court adjacent to CCB.
- Investigate the feasibility of virtual courtrooms.
- Determine the location/process of hearings at the new ITA facility.
- Work with Facilities to produce better signage at the CCB, with an emphasis on jury administration.

BROADENING ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC



- Support and encourage jury service.
- Expand available videos on Court website of Court processes, to include alternate languages.
- Translation of commonly used Juvenile court forms.
- Create a link to information on our website about types of Protection Orders and Joel's Law, with links to AOC forms.
- Increase options to assist Pro-Se litigants navigating the family law process.
- Assess the viability of updating our webpage to provide resources for self-represented parties.

PROMOTING COMPETENCE, PROFESSIONALISM AND CIVILITY



- Final review of the Superior Court Personnel Manual updates.
- Judicial and staff education and training on issues of implicit and unconscious bias.
- Reach out to the TPCBA about judges providing CLE's on ethics.

EFFECTIVELY UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY



- Investigate Jury Administration installing digital signs or screens in hall, jury room and lobby displaying the status of a group or if they are lining up.
- Investigate text reminder system for court proceedings.
- Make the website more user friendly and showcase the courts work.
- Implement video conferencing at the Lakewood and South Hill kiosks.
- Implement video arraignments for High Risk inmates.

BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE THROUGH COMMUNITY OUTREACH



- Complete Phase 3 of the Court History Project.
- Attend a community event with Administration employees to encourage employment and jury service.
- Attend local Legal classes with Administration employees to encourage a diverse hiring pool.
- Council Member tours of Superior Court facilities/functions.
- Continue to engage in community service and educational projects and promote those events.
- Begin a school visit program at the County-City Building using retired judges.



SUPERIOR COURT STREET LAW VISIT

March 20, 2018 PC Superior Court Judge G. Helen Whitener hosted students from Lincoln High School's Street Law Class in her courtroom. Judge Whitener is an instructor in the Street Law program and as part of the class, brought the students to the County-City Building. Students heard presentations from Presiding Judge Elizabeth Martin, Judge Frank Cuthbertson, Judge Timothy Ashcraft, Commissioner Sabrina Ahrens and Court Administrator Chris Gaddis. They also discussed court functions with Judge Whitener's Judicial Assistant Rasheedah McGoodwin and observed "Real Time" court reporting from Court Reporter Kim O'Neill. After the presentations, students observed court proceedings in several courtrooms. The students were truly intrigued by how much work goes into making the court run.

Lincoln High School's Street Law class strives to empower young people to be active, engaged citizens by equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to successfully participate and create change in their communities. Street Law classes are expanding throughout Pierce County. Judge Phil Sorensen presented to Fife High School's Street Law class on December 13, 2018.



SUPERIOR COURT CRIMINAL DIVISION

Superior Court presides over felonies which are more serious crimes such as assault, robbery and murder, and are punishable in excess of one year. Criminal cases begin by the Prosecutor’s Office filing a criminal charge on behalf of the State of Washington. Generally, thirteen judges and one court commissioner are assigned to hear criminal dockets and trials.

In order to ensure the entire criminal justice system runs as smooth as possible, the court and its stakeholders spent a majority of 2017 and 2018 improving processes to gain efficiencies. At the request of the bench, the Pierce County Prosecutor’s Office ended the Special Assault Unit. This opened two judicial departments who were previously only assigned Special Assault cases. The bench also undertook a Criminal Best Practices Manual. This manual put best practices in place for all criminal trial departments to follow, which has improved case flow management, improving our weekly pending statistics and providing better service to victims and defendants.

2017-2018 CRIMINAL STATISTICS



46 JUDICIAL OFF.
AND STAFF



10,123
FILINGS



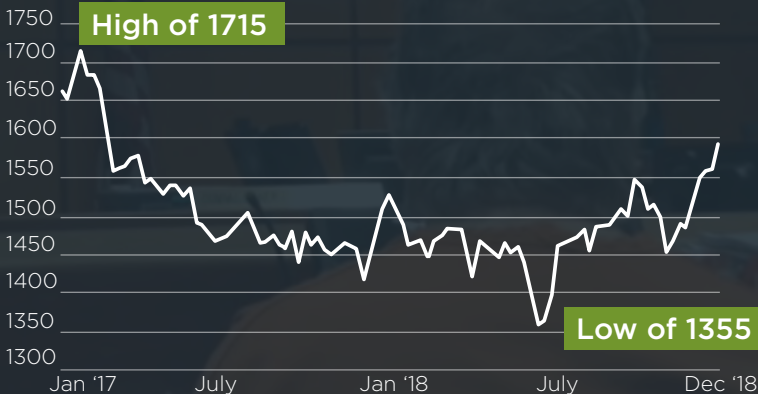
137,779
PROCEEDINGS



10,564
RESOLUTIONS

*Two Criminal Departments handle Therapeutic Courts

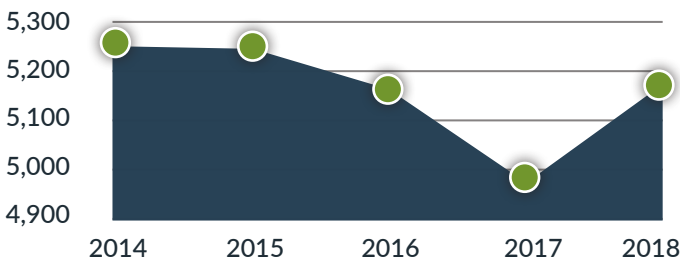
2017-2018 WEEKLY PENDING CRIMINAL CASES



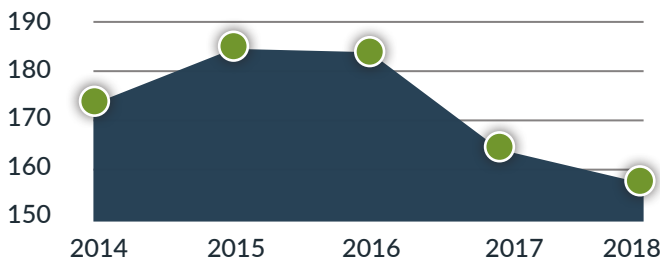
NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATE COURTS

Nearly two years ago, Pierce County Superior Court judges agreed to participate in a national study of criminal case processing. The National Center for State Courts visited Pierce County Superior Court as part of their Effective Criminal Case Management Project. The \$1.5 million dollar project was a 3-year effort to gather case-level data on felonies and misdemeanors from courts around the country. They evaluated how courts are managing these cases. Earlier this year, the Project identified Pierce County Superior Court as one of six courts found to be most effective in achieving timely criminal case processing out of the 96 courts from which they collected data. The Project plans to publish “a range of evidence-based practices available in a form easily used by court managers and judges” to improve management of criminal cases, reduce delay and cost and, by so doing, improve the quality of justice.

NUMBER OF CRIMINAL CASES FILED



NUMBER OF CRIMINAL TRIALS HELD



2018 WOMAN OF DISTINCTION

During a luncheon at Hotel Murano on Thursday, April 19th, Judge Susan Serko was awarded the 2018 Woman of Distinction Award by the Girl Scouts of Western Washington. Judge Serko was nominated by a few of her fellow Pierce County Superior Court colleagues. Judge Serko was nominated because she is an outstanding jurist who is widely respected for her compassion, intellect, honesty and fairness to all who appear before her, even in the toughest of circumstances. As a youth, Judge Serko was a Girl Scout in both New York and Alaska. As an adult, she exemplifies the Girl Scout Law. Judge Serko is a leader in her community and on the Pierce County Superior Court Bench.



Pictured L to R; Judges Johnson, Schwartz, Hickman and Arend, holding cut-outs of Judge Serko and her sister who were in the Girl Scouts as children.



2018 HIGHLIGHT Courthouse History

Pierce County Superior Court held a courthouse mural project reveal party on November 29, 2018 to celebrate the completion of phase two of the court history project entitled, "Honoring the Rule of Law." The mural features five museum-quality panels depicting the three courthouses that previously housed Superior Court and its current home, the County-City Building. The last panel gives an overview of Pierce County government. Judges Stephanie Arend and Karena Kirkendoll spearheaded this second phase by conducting research, combing through archives, and visiting sites to create accurate and fascinating snapshots of each courthouse.

At the panel reveal party, Judge Stephanie Arend remarked that while the buildings and some processes within Superior Court have changed, the core principles remain the same. Judge Arend hopes the mural project can spark the public's curiosity about the Court and will encourage people to do their own research to learn more. The panels are available for viewing inside the second-floor entrance of the County-City Building.



Judge Stephanie Arend and County Executive Bruce Dammeier during the Court History Mural Reveal Party.

SUPERIOR COURT CIVIL DIVISION

Decisions in Civil Law are based upon a preponderance of the evidence. The party suing (plaintiff) must prove his or her case by presenting evidence that is more persuading to the trier of fact (judge or jury) than the opposing evidence. There are special court procedures for the protection of persons threatened by harassment and domestic violence. Persons may request protection orders through the Clerk's Office.

ABOUT CIVIL DIVISION

Five judges and up to five commissioners handle all non-juvenile civil matters. These judges also take criminal trials when their schedule opens due to last minute settlements.

Areas of Principal Responsibilities

- Actions arising from landlord and tenant disputes
- Adoptions
- Breach of warranty on consumer goods
- Contract disputes
- Guardianships
- Marriage dissolutions
- Personal injuries
- Probates
- Professional liability suits

FAMILY LAW CASE TECHNICIAN (FLCT)

The Family Law Case Technician (FLCT) is available to parties when any Family Law case, not just a Family Court case, is ready for resolution with the Commissioners, Civil and Family Division. Approximately 300 cases were resolved in 2018 with the assistance of the FLCT. The FLCT also assists to ensure meaningful access to justice for incarcerated individuals who are involved in Family Law Matters.

2017-2018 CIVIL STATISTICS



23 JUDICIAL OFF.
AND STAFF



34,438
FILINGS



25,572
PROCEEDINGS



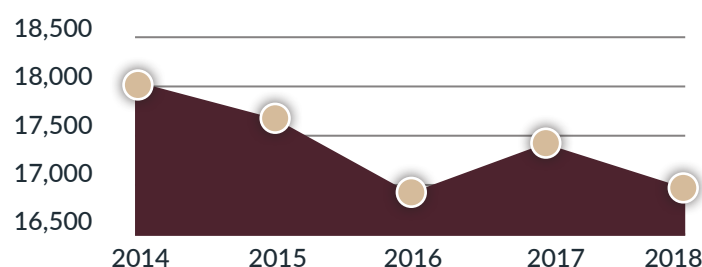
34,154
RESOLUTIONS

In 2012 the Pierce County Superior Court initiated a dedicated Civil docket designed to reduce a significant backlog of cases. This was necessary as civil cases constitute the broadest and most diverse areas of law brought before the Pierce County Superior Court. Pre-trial hearings and trials are heard by judges and by juries. These cases include family law, including dependency, divorce and support matters, personal injury, products liability, professional malpractice, real estate, real property disputes, environmental law, construction law, employment law, workers compensation, civil rights and labor law. This change has resulted in more efficient processing of cases, thereby better serving the citizens of Pierce County. Today, citizens with civil claims can count on an expeditious and efficient resolution of their cases.

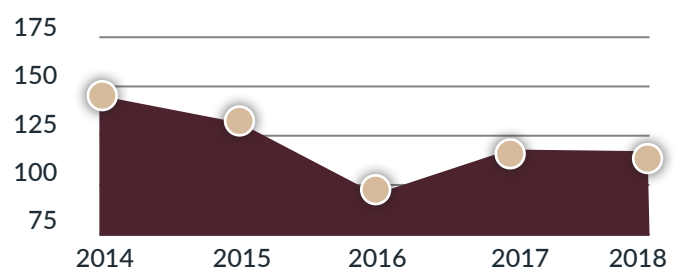


Judge Nevin is shown during a speaking engagement at Stadium High School during Law Week.

NUMBER OF CIVIL CASES FILED



NUMBER OF CIVIL TRIALS HELD





HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Every year, judicial officers and their families participate in a project build with Habitat for Humanity. In June of 2017, several judges, commissioners and their families worked at The Woods at Golden Given. This site is a 30-home development for Habitat for Humanity. Superior Court joined two other groups to lay floor tile, install outdoor soffits, caulk, paint, and complete landscaping work.

In June of 2018, judicial officers and their families helped at another Habitat for Humanity build site. The staff members were spread out over four different houses that were at various stages of construction. Among the many things they accomplished: there were people on scaffolding wrapping a house with Tyvek and then installing insulation; grout around floor tiles was painted; caulking around windows and other openings and lots of construction clean up.



SUPERIOR COURT FAMILY COURT SERVICES

Pierce County's Family Court Services is dedicated to implementing and putting into practice learned lessons, which provide resources, reduce conflict and resolve disputes involving the custody of children in a timely manner.

ABOUT FAMILY COURT SERVICES

Over 2000 families were involved in a Family Court case in 2018. The issues may include agreed changes to a parenting plan or a grandparent requesting custody of a grandchild when the parent is unable to provide for their child. No matter what the issue, the children suffer from the uncertainty and the conflict that is created. Timely resolution of disagreement minimizes the pain and damages these children and their families' experience.

Two judicial departments and five commissioners handle Family Court cases, with support from Family Court Services. Created in 2017, Family Court Services blended existing court positions into one section to coordinate resources to meet the needs of self-represented individuals, as well as the Family and Civil Divisions.

Family Court Services includes a Legal Assistant and the Family Court Services Supervisor who coordinate the various programs and provide case management. Two Family Law Staff Guardian Ad Litem's are available for self-represented individuals who cannot pay the GAL retainer, and a Family Law Case Technician assists self-represented parties complete documents required to finalize their case.

2017-2018 FAMILY STATISTICS

90% of Family Court Cases Resolved w/in 1 year



16 JUDICIAL OFF.
AND STAFF



9,858
FILINGS



18,914
PROCEEDINGS



10,006
RESOLUTIONS

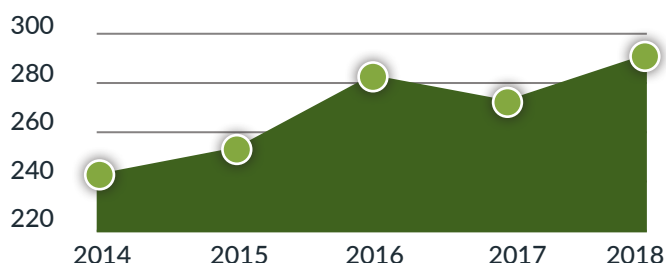


Judge Kirkendoll being sworn-in in early January 2017. She was assigned to Family Court in 2018.

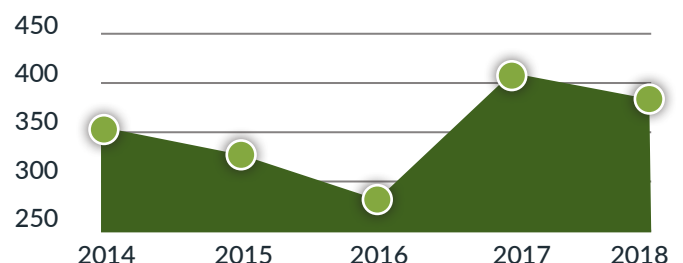
STAFF GUARDIAN AD LITEM'S

A guardian ad litem (GAL) is an adult who is appointed by the court to represent the best interests of an individual for a specific purpose for a specific period of time. Under the direction of the court, a GAL performs an investigation and prepares a report for the court of the GAL's findings and recommendations. The GAL's responsibilities and duties are set forth by statute, court rule and the order appointing the GAL. Superior Court is lucky to have two staff GAL's who provide services for the Family courts in the most serious of cases. In 2017, the court added our second GAL. Over the last two years, our staff GAL's have been assigned **62** cases and have served **93** children throughout the Puget Sound Region.

NUMBER OF 3RD PARTY CUSTODY CASES FILED



NUMBER OF FAMILY DIVISION TRIALS HELD



SUPERIOR COURT JUVENILE COURT

Pierce County Juvenile Court, also known as Remann Hall, is committed to making a powerful contribution to the health and safety of our community. We envision a safe, connected community where all youth are supported and empowered to build on their strengths so they can reach their potential.

ABOUT JUVENILE COURT

The Pierce County Juvenile Court has exclusive jurisdiction over those juveniles within Pierce County who violate the criminal laws of this state or who are in need of protection and/or advocacy as a result of abuse, neglect or abandonment. The Juvenile Department provides probation, court, detention and adoption services. Juvenile Court is handled by two Judicial Departments and two Court Commissioners. They are supported by Juvenile Court Administration staff members, which is a separate department from Superior Court Administration. We are fortunate to have 151 talented, caring and committed staff who are advocating for abused and neglected children to get into safe/permanent homes, supporting kids and families struggling with school attendance, creating meaningful interventions for youth who break the law, and providing residential custody of young people who pose a danger to the community.

2017-2018 JUVENILE STATISTICS



8 JUDICIAL OFF.
AND STAFF



7,257
FILINGS



73,553
PROCEEDINGS



7,050
RESOLUTIONS



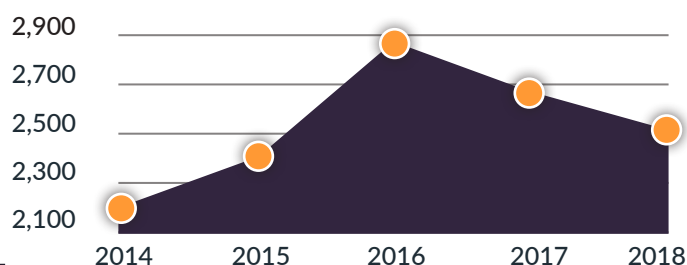
BABY COURT

"Baby Court" was developed at Remann Hall in 2016 in order to provide our most vulnerable infants with a fast-track to permanency. Parents, and care givers, are provided pathways to success in obtaining community-based services which allow for maximum bonding under court supervision.

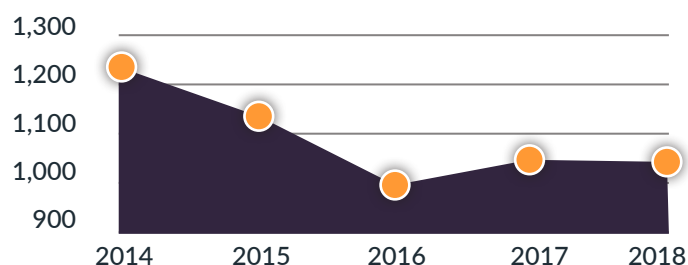
Currently we have 19 infants and hope to expand to 100 children in a model program that is the first of its kind in the Northwest. This project is only possible because of the collaboration between a team of court partners who are dedicated to what is "Best for Babies".

JUVENILE
FELONY
PETITIONS
HAVE
DROPPED BY
**63% SINCE
2000**

NUMBER OF JUVENILE CIVIL CASES FILED



NUMBER OF JUVENILE CRIMINAL CASES FILED





Color of
Justice

SUPERIOR COURT COLOR OF JUSTICE EVENT

The National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ), Color of Justice Event, was held at Pierce County Superior Court on August 17, 2017. This program was adapted by Pierce County Superior Court Judge G. Helen Whitener with the goal of connecting girls from marginalized communities to female judges who can mentor and empower them. The one-day event sought to encourage girls ages 11-18 to consider a career in law and the judiciary. The program intends to have the girls meet, participate with and observe the legal process through the eyes of female members of the judiciary. Over 60 girls from many jurisdictions in Western Washington attended the event. There was a keynote speech by Washington Supreme Court Justice Mary Yu.

In December of 2017, Judge Whitener presented the highlights of Pierce County's Color of Justice event to the Board of Trustees for the Superior Court Judges Association (SCJA). Because of the success of our program, the SCJA Equality and Fairness Committee provided funding for other courts to host a Color of Justice Event in their jurisdiction. The SCJA approved support for 3 new court locations every year. Courts throughout Washington State can apply to the SCJA and receive up to \$2,000 to assist with the costs of the program if their location is chosen.



SUPERIOR COURT THERAPEUTIC DIVISION

In an attempt to address the substance abuse and mental health crisis which is affecting communities across America, Pierce County has been a long term participant in Therapeutic Courts. Since 1994, Pierce County has dedicated judicial resources to national best practice programs which seek to combat the over population of our jails and prisons with people who could benefit from treatment intervention. We accomplish this through programs like Felony Drug Court (with a Veteran's track), Family Recovery Court, Felony Mental Health Court and just recently added Assisted Outpatient Treatment Court.

Felony Drug Court

The primary goal of the Pierce County Felony Drug Court is to reduce recidivism and the need for incarceration by offering an alternative to jail and probation through participation in assessment, education and treatment for nonviolent, drug-addicted defendants that will take a minimum of 12 months.

2018 STATS



580
SCREENINGS



188
ADMITS



87
GRADUATES

Family Recovery Court (FRC)

FRC is designed to work with families who abuse or neglect their children as a result of substance abuse. It is a collaborative program, with the WA Dept. of Social and Health Services, Pierce County Alliance, the Dept. of Assigned Counsel, and the Attorney General's Office.

2018 STATS



78
SCREENINGS



75
ADMITS



10
GRADUATES

Felony Mental Health Court (FMHC)

FMHC aims to reduce recidivism associated with justice involved mentally ill defendants, and allow them to engage in a range of treatment services instead of incarceration. FMHC takes a minimum of 18 months to complete and is a partnership between the criminal justice system and the behavioral health system.

2018 STATS



124
SCREENINGS



43
ADMITS



13
GRADUATES

ASSISTED OUTPATIENT TREATMENT COURT

Assisted Outpatient Behavioral Health Treatment (AOBHT) is court-supervised treatment provided in a community setting. To be admitted to the program an individual must have had at least one involuntary hospitalization in the previous 36 months and agree to participate in the program.

The Pierce County pilot program began in July of 2018 and is a partnership with Mobile Crisis Outreach, Superior Court and Comprehensive Life Resources. As of December 2018, the program had served 9 individuals, with two graduates. No one has been terminated from the program or been hospitalized.

**AOBHT COURT
IS A 90 DAY
INTERVENTION
PROGRAM AND
IS PARTIALLY
GRANT FUNDED
THROUGH
BEACON HEALTH
OPTIONS**



THERAPEUTIC COURT TESTIMONIAL

I began having mental health problems when I was in my mid-twenties. I was in the military and began having disciplinary problems. Because of the discipline problems I began drinking alcohol excessively and started experimenting with other drugs too.

I was out of control and I felt completely helpless. In 2006 I had my first run-in with the law and I received my first DUI, and in 2009 I received my second. In 2013, I became homeless and found myself living on the streets in Los Angeles. It was unquestionably the scariest experience of my life. I eventually made it back to Washington State absolutely in the worst condition of my life. I was broke, homeless, in debt, had numerous fines and warrants, no friends, an alcohol and drug addiction, a growing criminal record and some very serious mental health issues that were not being addressed properly. In June of 2015 I was arrested once again. Through some chance of fate this was around the same time that Felony Mental Health Court began. I got on medication, began counseling, I received 18 months of mental health and drug and alcohol treatment and I did everything else I was instructed to do to the best of my ability. It was very hard work and took a lot of time and effort. With the support of others and my will to want to turn my life around, things began to get better for me and those around me.

My life has completely turned around for the better. I have taken care of most of my debts and all my outstanding fines. I now have a driver's license and I own a car once again. I graduated from Tacoma Community College with an Associate's degree last summer and am now attending the University of Washington here in Tacoma for a bachelor's degree in economics. Today I have some very close relationships with some good people and have made amends with most of my family. I have also been clean and sober for over three years and I continue doing work in the clean and sober community to try to help other's recover from their addictions. Most importantly I have found my home and a new and healthy direction in life that I continue to follow today.

What I learned most from Felony Mental Health Court is that there are people who care, that the system can work for you and the most important thing to getting better is to be willing to accept help when you need it. I also know now that recovery is a never-ending road and that I must continue to work hard to continue to get better. I graduated from Felony Mental Health Court in April of 2017. My experience with this program unquestionably changed my life for the better in so many ways. I have the highest regard for all the staff members on the FACT team and the Court, and everyone else that helped me through this difficult time in my life.

Chris Kaiser, Therapeutic Courts Alumni





Bottom Row: Meagan Foley, appointed August 1988, Mark Gelman, appointed January 2001, Robyn Lindsay, appointed October 2006, Diana L. Kiesel, appointed October 2009 Top Row: Clint Johnson, appointed October 2010, Craig Adams, appointed March 2012, Barbara McInville appointed January 2017, Sabrina Ahrens appointed February 2017, Terri Farmer appointed November 2017.

2017-2018 County City Building COMMISSIONER STATISTICS



10 JUDICIAL OFF.
AND STAFF



4,018
PATERNITY
CASES HEARD

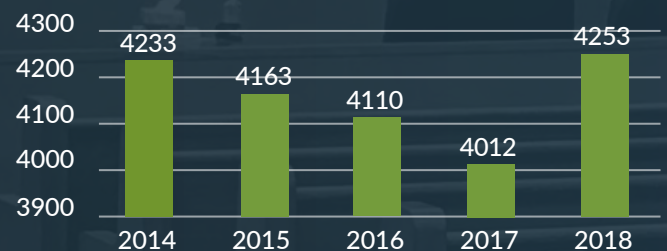


3,936
UNCONTESTED
DISSOLUTIONS

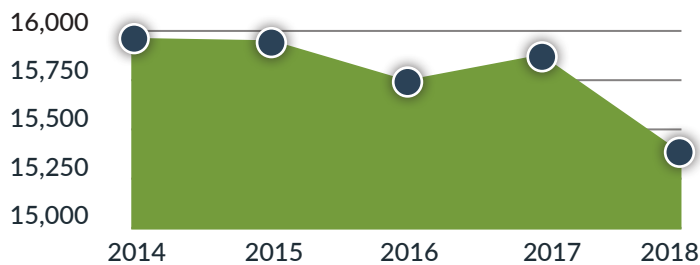


7,340
DV CASES
HEARD

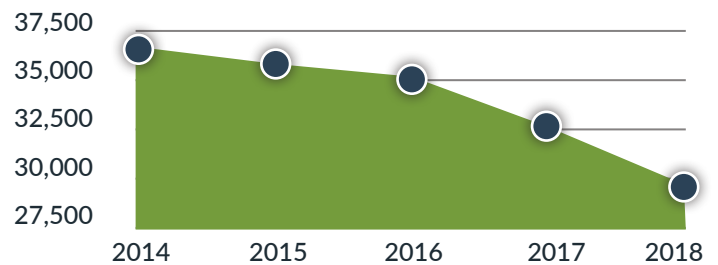
Criminal Commissioner Arraignments Held



NUMBER OF NON-EX PARTE PROCEEDINGS HEARD



NUMBER OF EX PARTE PROCEEDINGS HEARD



Judge Hickman and Commissioner McInville

Judge Cuthbertson and Commissioner Ahrens

Commissioner Farmer and Judge Hickman



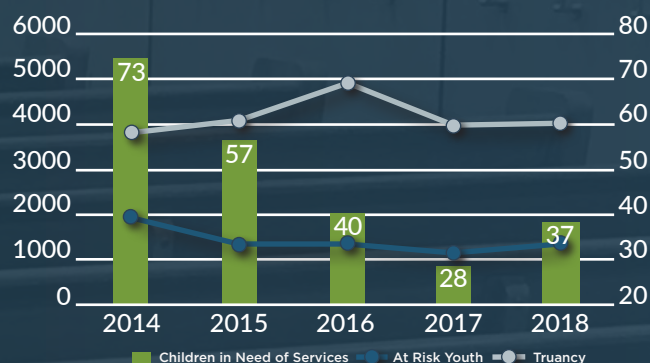
SUPERIOR COURT COMMISSIONERS

In Pierce County Superior Court, 9 Commissioners are employed by the judges to assist with Civil, Juvenile, Civil Mental Health, Adoptions and Criminal matters. Five Commissioners hear civil matters at the County City Building, to include matters such as Divorce, Parenting Plans, Paternity, Non-Parental Custody, Guardianships, Evictions, Orders for Immediate Relief, Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Weapon Surrender Hearings. One Commissioner is assigned to criminal arraignments in one of three high volume criminal courts. Two Commissioners preside at Remann Hall handling criminal and dependency cases and one Commissioner presides at Western State Hospital hearing involuntary commitment matters.

JUVENILE COURT (REMANN HALL) COMMISSIONERS

Two Court Commissioners serve at Remann Hall. One Commissioner hears cases involving juvenile offenders, dependency shelter care and termination hearings, file sealings and at-risk youth contempt. The second Commissioner presides over school truancy cases, at-risk youth cases, anti-harassment protection orders, adoption timeliness, shelter care hearings and dependency reviews, and some criminal cases. Juvenile Commissioners also participate in some six Juvenile Court committees and have regular, on-going meetings with various work groups, including community stakeholders.

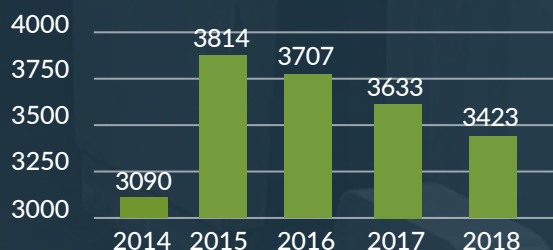
The Juvenile offender dockets often include a multitude of offenses, including murder and sexual assault. Many youth appearing before Commissioners suffer from substance abuse disorder and /or mental health issues. There are limited resources to serve this population. The court is constantly working to secure targeted resources to address this need.



WESTERN STATE HOSPITAL COMMISSIONER

Case load statistics from 2016 through 2018 generally show the case load remaining fairly static. The statistics show some trends that are affecting our designated position of Mental Health Commissioner. They really break into two distinct areas with collateral impacts into other positions. Cases involving minors have increased by 250%. This is not surprising given the levels of mental health dysfunction and co-dependency issues observed among youth appearing in front of Commissioners at Remann Hall. It is a troubling trend and these cases certainly require more time to resolve.

Mental Health Hearings Heard at WSH



“Felony Flips” are those cases that have largely come from the Forensic unit at Western State. The person has been found not competent and not restorable for a criminal case. The state then “flips” the case from criminal (which is dismissed without prejudice) to a civil involuntary commitment referral. In two years, the number has increased by just shy of 175%. The impact of these types of cases is primarily on level of workload, with the “Felony Flips” being effectively “mini-criminal” trials and may take several hours with multiple witnesses—both lay and professional.



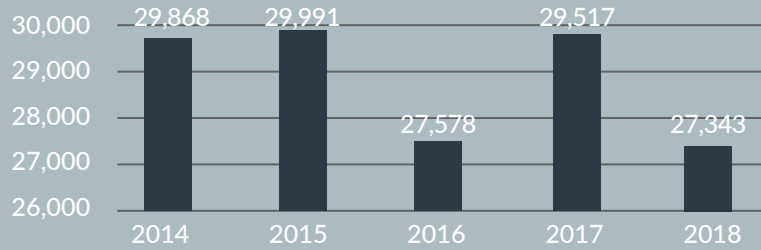
COURTHOUSE SECURITY **ACTIVE SHOOTER TRAINING**

Active shooter training has been a strategic priority for the court for several years. In March of 2018, the court was able to complete both a classroom and a simulated scenario training in conjunction with the Pierce County Sheriff's Office. Almost every one of our staff, including judicial officers and their staff, were able to attend the classroom and scenario training. Superior Court also opened the scenario training to District Court, Clerk's Office, Council and Executive staff.



SUPERIOR COURT JUROR SERVICES

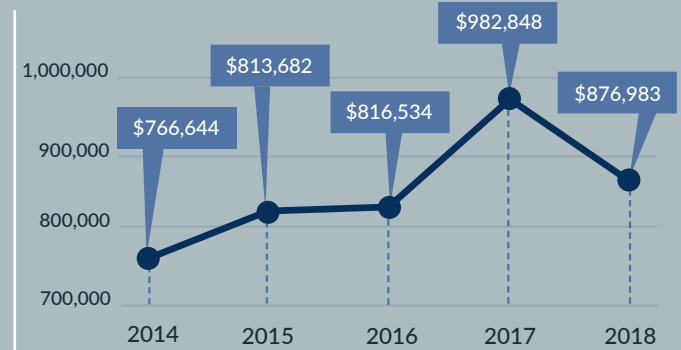
Number of Juror Days Assigned to a Courtroom



Jury summons provided to 21 jurisdictions in Pierce County. Jury Administration provided for Superior Court, District Court and Tacoma Municipal Court.

TOTAL JUROR COST

Mileage, Jury Pay and Transportation Costs

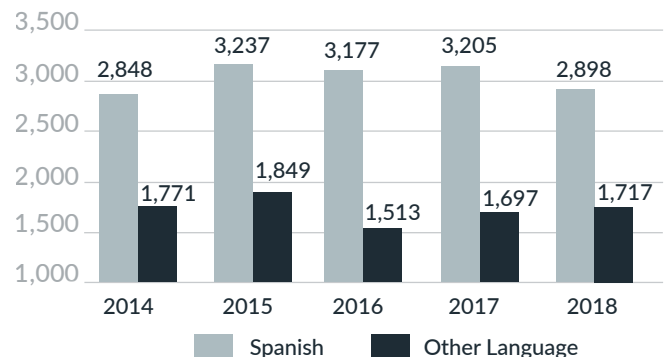


In May of 2017, Court Administrator Chris Gaddis (pictured left), presented at the Jury Diversity Symposium in front of the Washington State Supreme Court. His presentation used "Heat Maps" to provide visual representation of where groups of jurors were not responding to summonses. This presentation led to appointments onto several statewide task forces assigned to address juror participation and encouragement of diverse juries.

SUPERIOR COURT INTERPRETER SERVICES

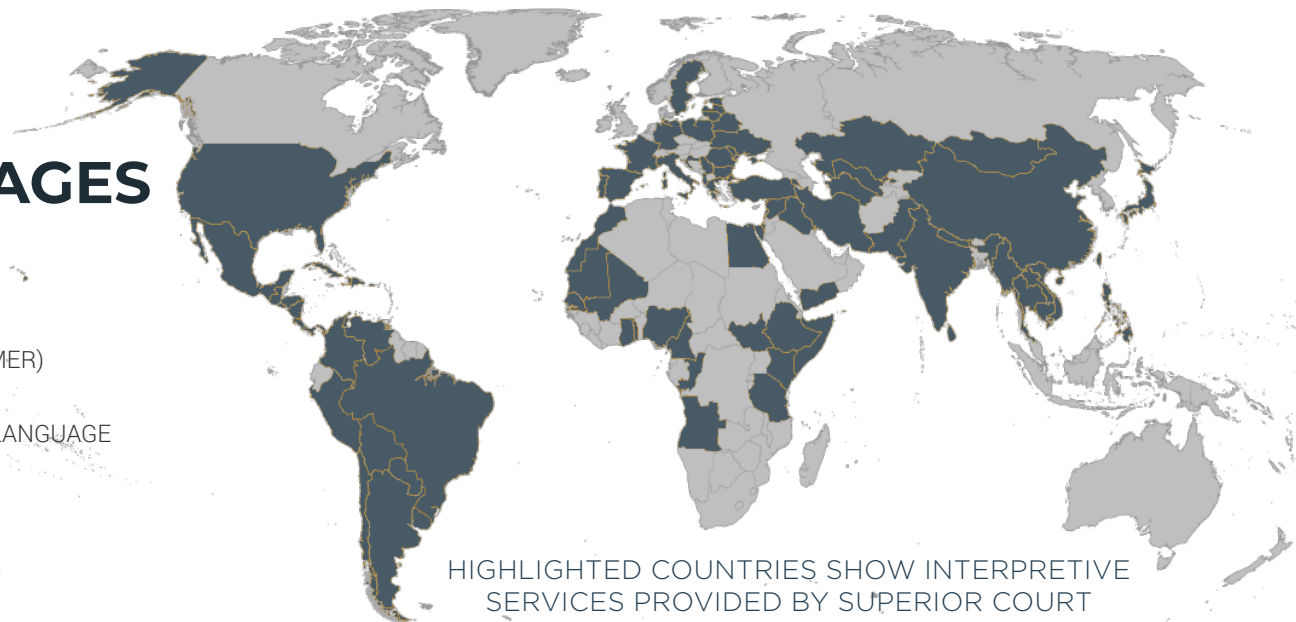
Our Interpreter's Office provides interpreter services for all criminal and civil cases in Superior, Juvenile, and District Courts. We also provide interpreters for the Department of Assigned Counsel (DAC) attorneys who need to communicate with Limited English Proficient (LEP) clients, and also to the Prosecutor's Office for defense interviews and witnesses who need language assistance. In 2018, Superior Court utilized **117** interpreters for **43** different languages. Since 2008, Superior Court has provided interpreters for more than **90** different languages to include American Sign Language (ASL).

INTERPRETER USAGE 2014-2018



TOP 10 LANGUAGES

1. SPANISH
2. RUSSIAN
3. VIETNAMESE
4. CAMBODIAN (KHMER)
5. KOREAN
6. AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE
7. SAMOAN
8. ARABIC
9. MANDARIN
10. CANTONESE





JUDICIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

JUDGE NEVIN

2018 OUTSTANDING ADJUNCT FACULTY AWARD



On June 28, 2017, Judge Jack Nevin was awarded the Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award by Seattle University School of Law. This well-deserved award recognized Judge Nevin's exceptional teaching abilities and devotion to legal education. Judge Nevin has been an adjunct faculty member at Seattle University since 1992. He team teaches Pre-Trial Advocacy and Trial Advocacy with King County Superior Court Judge Matthew Williams, and also teaches Advanced Evidence, Civil Procedures and a Military Law Seminar.

JUDGE CHUSHCOFF

WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS AWARD



At the Law Day luncheon on May 5, 2017, Judge Bryan Chushcoff was recognized for over 20 years of service as a Superior Court Judge. Judge Chushcoff was presented the William O. Douglas Award from the Washington State Association for Justice. The award is named after United States Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas who was the longest serving justice in the history of the US Supreme Court. He spent almost 40 years on the Supreme Court Bench. Justice Douglas is the only Supreme Court Justice from Washington State.

JUDGE AREND

WILLIAM NEVINS AWARD 2018



During the 2018 Washington State Superior Court Judges Fall Conference in Yakima, Judge

Stephanie Arend was awarded the prestigious William Nevins Award. The award was for her work on youth and public education about the judiciary. She joins a most distinguished group of past recipients, including Pierce County Superior Court Judge Kitty-Ann van Doorninck, who received the Nevins Award in 2013. Judge Arend has been passionately dedicated to educating youth and the public about the judiciary throughout her career. Her passion has manifested in tangible and meaningful contributions to fostering understanding and respect for the judiciary.

JUDGE MURPHY

2018 OUTSTANDING JURIST AWARD



On February 9, 2018, Judge Ed Murphy was named Outstanding Jurist during the Lincoln Day banquet. This well-deserved award recognized Judge Murphy for his outstanding work

in pioneering Felony Mental Health Court, as well as his work in Drug Court. This award is presented by the members of the Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association.

JUDGE WHITENER

WA WOMEN LAWYERS WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD 2018 AND MINORITY & JUSTICE COMMISSION APPOINTMENT



Judge Whitener received the Pierce County WA Women Lawyers Woman of the Year award in 2018. The announcement for the event stated, "Judge Whitener is an ambassador of self-worth and gentle perseverance who has been working tirelessly to increase diversity and inclusion in our community, and we are delighted to celebrate her." Judge Whitener was also elected co-chair of the Washington Supreme Court Minority and Justice Commission, taking up the position after long-time co-chair, Supreme Court Justice Charles Johnson, chose to step down.

JUDGE HICKMAN & BABY COURT TEAM

LEE ANN MILLER GROUP AWARD AND CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN AWARD



'Baby Court' implemented in October 2016, has received state-wide and national recognition for its innovative, best practice approach surrounding infants and toddlers in the child welfare system. This court model, led by Judge John R. Hickman received the 2018 Lee Ann Miller Group Award as "the program that has made the greatest impact and/or contribution in furthering the goals of the Children's Justice Act." Additionally, Judge Hickman was recognized by Project Child Success as one of the 2018 Champions for Children Award recipients for his leadership of Baby Court.

Superior Court RETIREMENTS



After 18 years as a Pierce County Superior Court Commissioner, Mary Dicke retired effective April 1, 2017. Commissioner Dicke was appointed as Commissioner on February 1, 1999.

Mary graduated from Pitzer College in Claremont, California with a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy. Mary met her husband, Jeff, while attending Hofstra Law School in New York.

At her festive retirement party held March 17, 2017 at Remann Hall, Commissioner Dicke was honored for her nearly two decades of passionate work on behalf of families and children, and her unwavering protection of rights for our County's most vulnerable citizens.

Annual Report Credits

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PIERCE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT