



King County

Department of Judicial Administration

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King County Superior Court

2020 Annual Statistical Report

Department of Judicial Administration

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Report #: YR-2020

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2020 Highlights

The coronavirus pandemic has greatly impacted the 2020 statistics.

This 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 2020 was significantly lower than that in 2019 (-27%). In 2020, the total filings (including “Matters Filed with Clerk”) were 45,887 cases. Total judicial filings (after excluding “Matters Filed with Clerk”) decreased by 19% from 2019 (-19%), totaling 43,103 cases. The decrease in 2020 filings occurred in all case categories, except in ITA and juvenile termination. The criminal filings (excluding criminal appeals) were 5,877 cases in 2020, showing an 11% decrease from 2019. General civil filings (case type 2, excluding “Matters Filed with Clerk” and civil RALJ) in 2020 were lower than that in 2019 (-28%). Domestic filings (case type 3) in 2020 was also lower than that in 2019 (-15%). Involuntary Treatment Act (ITA) filings increased slightly again in 2020 and continued the upward pattern, exceeding 5,000 cases for the first time with 5,131 cases (+146 cases from 2019). In 2020, a significant decrease in filings was observed in the following categories: parentage (-35%), juvenile dependency (-46%), and juvenile offender (-30%).
- **Resolutions** (Table 2). The total resolutions (including “Matters Filed with Clerk”) in 2020 were 44,042 cases, a 29% decrease from 2019. The overall resolution volume was significantly lower than that in previous years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The resolutions were notably lower than the filings in 2020 in criminal cases and juvenile termination.
- **Pending Caseload** (Table 3). The overall pending caseload at the end of 2020 was 22,977 cases, showing a mild increase from the end of 2019 (+4%). However, the impact of COVID-19 is different for different case types. Compared to 2019, significant increases in pending caseload at the end of 2020 were observed in criminal (+2,519 cases, or +71%), and juvenile termination cases (+105 cases or +38%). The increase in the pending criminal pending caseload was due to two factors: 1) slow resolutions; and 2) the court was restrained from issuing bench warrants, resulting in more criminal cases on active status instead of warrant status, as would be the case in normal circumstances. On the other hand, no noticeable increase in pending caseload was seen for all other case types due to low numbers in filings.
- **Trials**. Overall, there were 151 jury trials in 2020, less than half of the 343 jury trials in 2019. There were 525 non-jury trials in 2020, also significantly lower than 2019. In addition, there were 185 other trials (trial by affidavit and stipulated trials) in 2020.
- **MRJC vs. SEA** (Table 4). Of the total 45,887 cases (including Matters filed with the Clerk) filed in 2020, 34% were MRJC cases. The MRJC resolutions (34%, as a percentage of total resolutions in KCSC) in 2020 were comparable to the filings at MRJC (34% of the total filings). At the end of 2020, the MRJC pending caseload was 37% of that of the entire court, including all case categories. In 2020, the MRJC accounted for 43%, 41%, and 39% of total criminal, civil and domestic case filings, respectively.

Table 1. Annual Filings

Category	Annual Filings										2019-2020
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change
Criminal	5,986	5,942	6,045	6,213	6,237	6,632	6,441	5,989	6,607	5877	-730
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	27,542	24,513	22,410	21,418	21,217	21,222	21,517	22,217	21,202	15352	-5,850
Domestic	7,865	7,678	7,897	7,921	7,559	7,512	7,597	7,640	7,280	6163	-1,117
Probate	5,417	5,492	5,844	5,920	6,022	6,073	6,418	6,382	6,804	6766	-38
Guardianship	837	879	884	928	969	1,008	949	977	706	725	19
Adoption	688	511	483	470	460	458	546	445	483	431	-52
Parentage	1,039	1,161	931	702	650	528	539	512	526	340	-186
Involuntary Treatment Act	3,506	3,591	3,678	3,852	4,004	4,152	4,694	4,910	4,985	5131	146
Juvenile At-Risk Youth/Child in-need of Service /Others	303	242	203	285	217	247	245	292	206	187	-19
Juvenile Dependency	838	853	893	940	848	727	793	788	811	435	-376
Juvenile Termination	222	197	209	321	214	219	304	344	225	291	66
Juvenile Truancy	1,350	1,271	1,236	1,233	1,369	1,222	1,547	1,925	1,706	501	-1,205
Juvenile Offender	2,496	2,249	1,808	1,802	1,649	1,295	1,324	1,229	1,121	788	-333
Criminal RALJ	191	192	181	172	180	111	136	117	146	63	-83
Civil RALJ	57	63	53	47	57	66	65	68	81	53	-28
Total Judicial Filings	58,337	54,834	52,755	52,224	51,652	51,472	53,115	53,835	52,889	43,103	-9,786
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	14,799	15,046	13,763	12,240	9,581	8,742	10,903	9,036	10,030	2784	-7,246
Total Annual Filings	73,136	69,880	66,518	64,464	61,233	60,214	64,018	62,871	62,919	45,887	-17,032
Post-disposition Modifications (domestic/parentage) ⁽²⁾	2,018	1,972	1,962	1,943	1844	1890	1916	1766	752	575	

- (1) "Civil Matters Filed with Clerk" consists 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) Prior to 2019, the numbers included both "parenting" and "support only" modifications. Since 2019, only the "parenting" modifications are included.

Table 2. Annual Resolutions

Category	Annual Resolutions										2019-2020
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change
Criminal	6,285	5,594	5,832	6,002	6,413	5,915	6,162	5,780	5,788	4085	-1,703
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	28,797	25,688	23,506	22,551	22,066	21,230	21,544	21,399	21,389	14765	-6,624
Domestic	7,952	7,713	7,915	7,861	7,885	7,479	7,564	7,696	7,295	5998	-1,297
Probate	5,435	5,356	5,770	5,842	5,874	5,948	6,182	6,134	6,764	6417	-347
Guardianship	824	874	847	948	910	988	906	915	656	668	12
Adoption	715	505	520	486	466	472	525	419	472	354	-118
Parentage	1,110	1,037	988	861	642	573	542	539	511	333	-178
Involuntary Treatment Act	3,434	3,794	3,887	3,836	4,015	4,178	4,632	4,672	4,980	4986	6
Juvenile At-Risk Youth/Child in-need of Service /Others	317	233	233	272	222	286	239	230	183	192	9
Juvenile Dependency	946	838	982	976	716	888	753	708	688	498	-190
Juvenile Termination	187	207	215	227	243	265	234	299	187	170	-17
Juvenile Truancy	1,765	1,135	1,187	813	948	1,385	1,535	1,300	1,632	1769	137
Juvenile Offender	2,645	2,150	1,738	1,616	1,533	1,401	1,179	1,252	1,034	831	-203
Criminal RALJ	187	186	179	161	173	159	128	127	134	136	2
Civil RALJ	53	55	60	57	51	67	58	71	67	60	-7
Total Judicial Resolutions	60,652	55,365	53,859	52,509	52,157	51,234	52,183	51,541	51,780	41,262	-10,518
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	14,799	15,046	13,763	12240	9581	8737	10905	9027	10032	2780	-7,252
Total Annual Resolutions	75,451	70,411	67,622	64,749	61,738	59,971	63,088	60,568	61,812	44,042	-17,770

- (1) "Civil Matters Filed with Clerk" consists 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.

Table 3. Year-end Pending Caseload

Category	Year-end Pending Caseload ⁽²⁾										2019-2020
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change
Criminal	2,549	2,780	2,865	2,866	2,619	3,193	3,172	3,150	3,564	6083	2,519
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾)	9,238	8,507	7,936	7,148	6,747	7,798	7,203	8,243	8,576	7778	-798
Domestic	4,421	4,458	4,486	4,579	4,234	4,337	4,366	4,381	4,384	4445	61
Probate	559	615	768	908	580	684	909	1,146	690	1023	333
Guardianship	261	248	303	301	311	329	376	409	235	290	55
Adoption	192	199	166	149	147	135	155	174	184	258	74
Parentage	377	500	446	300	310	253	245	225	251	248	-3
Involuntary Treatment Act	530	311	104	121	90	60	126	283	288	321	33
Juvenile At-Risk Youth/Child in-need of Service/Others	94	104	94	119	111	86	102	146	100	169	69
Juvenile Dependency	376	394	386	414	474	300	357	434	647	467	-180
Juvenile Termination	146	122	121	225	164	128	196	244	277	382	105
Juvenile Truancy	165	308	326	821	1,329	1,237	1,421	2,041	2,112	832	-1,280
Juvenile Offender	723	663	612	677	581	441	504	464	647	572	-75
Criminal RALJ	132	142	143	155	156	107	132	126	140	66	-74
Civil RALJ	34	45	38	28	33	31	41	38	51	43	-8
Year-end Total Pending Caseload⁽²⁾	19,797	19,396	18,794	18,811	17,886	19,119	19,305	21,504	22,146	22,977	831

(1) The statistics in this table does not include “Civil Matters Filed with Clerk”. “Civil Matters Filed with Clerk” consists of those civil cases that require no or little judicial resources and are resolved at the time of filing. This category includes the following cause codes of civil actions: Abstract of Judgment, Foreign Judgment, Tax Warrant, and Transcript of Judgment.

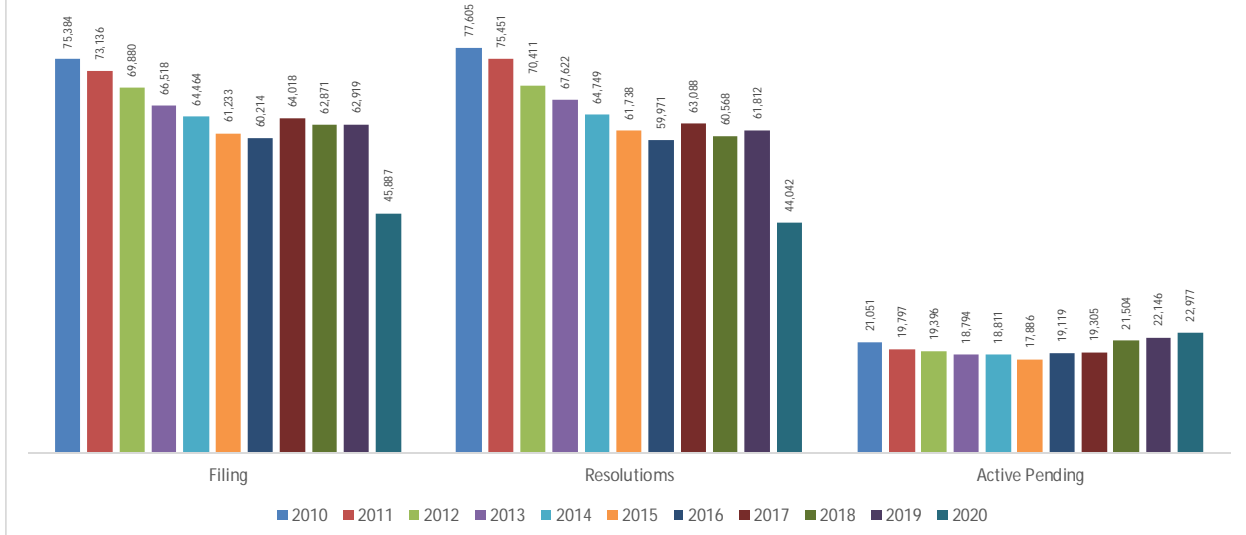
(2) Pending caseload does not include cases on suspense status.

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

Category	2020 Filings			2020 Resolutions			2020 Year-end Pending Caseload		
	MRJC (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)	MRJC (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)	MRJC (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)
Criminal	57%	43%	5877	59%	41%	4085	59%	41%	6083
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	59%	41%	15352	59%	41%	14765	65%	35%	7778
Domestic	61%	39%	6163	60%	40%	5998	59%	41%	4445
Probate	74%	27%	6766	74%	26%	6417	68%	32%	1023
Guardianship	65%	35%	725	64%	36%	668	63%	37%	290
Adoption	77%	23%	431	76%	24%	354	71%	30%	258
Parentage	47%	54%	340	44%	56%	333	38%	63%	248
Involuntary Treatment Act	100%	0%	5131	100%	0%	4986	100%	0%	321
Juvenile At-Risk Youth/Child in-need of Service /Others	55%	46%	187	52%	48%	192	58%	42%	169
Juvenile Dependency	69%	31%	435	62%	38%	498	65%	35%	467
Juvenile Termination	51%	49%	291	59%	41%	170	57%	43%	382
Juvenile Truancy	36%	64%	501	51%	49%	1769	48%	52%	832
Juvenile Offender	100%	0%	788	100%	0%	831	100%	0%	572
Criminal RALJ	83%	18%	63	85%	15%	136	91%	9%	66
Civil RALJ	79%	21%	53	87%	13%	60	74%	26%	43
Total Judicial Cases	67%	33%	43,103	67%	33%	41,262	63%	37%	22,977
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	57%	43%	2784	57%	43%	2780	---	---	---
Total Cases	66%	34%	45,887	67%	34%	44,042	---	---	---

(1) “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.

KCSC - Annual Filings, Resolutions, and Year-end Pending Caseload



Appendix Definition

Active Status

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

Adoption and Parentage Cases (case type 5)

ADP - Adoption
CFI - Confidential Intermediary
CHN - Confidential Change of Name
DIP - Disestablishment of Parentage
MDS - Modification/Support Only
MOD - Modification
MSC - Miscellaneous
OAA - Open Adoption Agreement
PAD - De Facto Parentage
PAG - Pre Birth Establish Parentage Genetic
PAS - Establish Parentage Gestational Surrogacy
PAT - Parentage
PPR - Initial Pre Placement Report
PRC - Parentage Rescission/Challenge
PUR - Parentage (URES/UFSA)
REL - Relinquishment
ROB - Relocation Objection
TER - Termination of Parental Rights

Case

A case is defined as a filing with an assigned case number.

Civil Cases (case type 2, no RALJ)

ALR - Administrative Law Review
ALRLI - L&I Administrative Law Review
AOD - Assurance of Discontinuance
ASB - Asbestos
ASP - Asbestos Personal Injury
ASW - Asbestos Wrongful Death
BAT - Petition to Appeal/Amend Ballot Title
CAA - Motion to Confirm/Compel Arbitration Award
CAF - Petition for Order Granting Judgment on Confession of Judgment
CHN - Non Confidential Change of Name
COL - Collection
COM - Commercial
CON - Condemnation
CRP - Certificate of Restoration of Opportunity
CRR - Petition for Certificate of Rehabilitation
DOL - Appeal Licensing Revocation
DSF - Notice of Deposit of Surplus Funds from Trustee's Sale of Real Property
DVP - Domestic Violence
ECP - Enforcement of Canadian Protection Order
EOM - Emancipation of Minor
FOR - Foreclosure
FPO - Foreign Protection Order
FVL - Motion to Show Cause /Fruivolous Lien
HAR - Unlawful Harassment
HSI - Application for Health & Safety Inspection
INJ - Injunction
IPL - Complaint for Interpleader
LUP - Land Use Petition
MAL - Other Malpractice
MED - Medical Malpractice
MER - Meretricious Relationships
MHA - Malicious Harassment
MSC - Miscellaneous
MST - Minor Settlement
MWP - Minor Work Permit
NJF - Non Judicial Filing
OSS - Petition to Issue Out of State Subpoena
PBC - Petition for Birth Certificate Change
PBJ - Petition for Justification /Bail Bond Company
PCC - Petition for Civil Commitment

PFA - Property Fairness Act
PIN - Personal Injury
PPT - Petition for Perpetuation of Testimony
PRA - Public Records Act
PRG - Property Damage /Gangs
PRP - Property Damage
PVO - Petition for Vehicle Ownership
QTI - Quiet Title
RCV - Petition to Appoint Receiver
RDR - Relief from Duty to Register
RFR - Restoration of Firearms Rights
RRC - Remove Restricted Covenant
SCA - Small Claims Appeal
SDR - School District /Required Action Plan
SER - Subdivision Election Process Law Review
SPC - Seizure of Property From Commission of a Crime
SPR - Seizure of Property Resulting From a Crime
STK - Stalking Protection
SXP - Sexual Assault Protection
TMV - Tort /Motor Vehicle
TSS - Petition for Approval of Transfer of Structured Settlement
TTO - Tort /Other
UND - Unlawful Detainer
VAP - Vulnerable Adult Protection Order
VEP - Voter Election Process Law Review
VVT - Victims of Motor Vehicle Theft /Civil Action
WDE - Wrongful Death
WHC - Writ of Habeas Corpus
WMW - Miscellaneous Writs
WRM - Writ of Mandamus
WRR - Writ of Restitution
WRV - Writ of Review
XRP - Extreme Risk Protection Order

Civil Matters Filed with Clerk (case type 2)

ABJ - Abstract of Judgment
FJU - Foreign Judgment
TAX - Tax Warrants
TRJ - Transcript of Judgment

Civil RALJ Cases (case type 2)

LCA - Lower Court Appeal /Civil
LCI - Lower Court Appeal /Infractions

Completion

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

Criminal Cases (case type 1, no 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
Others

Criminal RALJ Cases (case type 1)

CRJ - Criminal RALJ

Domestic Cases (case type 3)

CIR - Committed Intimate Relationship
CUS - Child Custody
DIC - Dissolution w/ Children
DIN - Dissolution no Children
DIS - Dissolution
DPC - Dissolution of Domestic Partnership w/ Children
DPN - Dissolution of Domestic Partnership /No Children
FJU - Out of State Support Registration /Foreign Judgment
INC - Annulment /Inv of Marriage w/ Children
IND - Annulment /Inv of Domestic Partnership w/ Children
INP - Invalidity, Domestic Partnership
INV - Annulment /Invalidity
MDS - Modification/Support Only
MOD - Modification
MSC - Miscellaneous
MWA - Mandatory Wage Assignment
OSC - Out of State Custody
PPS - Parenting Plan / Child Support
PSO - Petition for Entry of KC Support Order
RCV - Relative Child Visitation
RIC - Reciprocal, Resp in County
ROB - Relocation /Objection
ROC - Reciprocal, Resp out of County
RVC - Relative Child Visits
SDC - Legal Separation, Domestic Partnership w/ Children
SEC - Legal Separation w/ Children
SEP - Legal Separation
SPD - Legal Separation, Domestic Partnership /No Children
TSS - Structured Settlement

Jury Trial

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

Juvenile BECCA Cases (case type 7)

ARY - At Risk Youth
CNS - Child In Need Of Services
DDP - Developmental Disability
DGN - Dependency Guardianship
EFC - Extended Foster Care, Dependency
GFC - Guardianship Foster Children
RPR - Reinstatement of Parental Rights
RVS - Relative Visitation
TRU - Truancy
VYG - Vulnerable Youth Guardianship

Juvenile Dependency Cases (case type 7)

DEP – Dependency
TER - Termination of Parental Rights

Juvenile Offender Cases (case type 8)

Homicide
Sex Crime
Robbery
Assault
Theft/Burglary
Motor Vehicle Theft
Controlled Substance
Others

Involuntary Treatment Act Cases (case type 6)

Alcoholic Treatment (ALT)
ITA - Adult (MI)
ITA - Family (MIF)
ITA - Juvenile (MIJ)

Non-Jury Trial

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

Pending Case

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

Post-disposition Modifications

Petition to modify parenting plan after the resolution of the original case, based on the modification schedule.

Probate and Guardianship Cases (case type 5)

ABS - Absentee
AOS - Affidavit of Successor
ASE - Affidavit of Small Estate
DSC - Disclaimer
EST - Estate
FNW - Foreign Will
G/E - Guardianship/Estate
GDE - Guardianship of the Estate
GDN - Guardianship
GDP - Guardianship of the Person
LGD - Limited Guardianship
LGE - Limited Guardianship of the Estate
LGP - Limited Guardianship of the Person
MGD - Minor Guardianship
MSC - Miscellaneous
MST - Minor Settlement
NJB - Non Judicial Binding/TEDRA Agreement
NNC - Non Probate Notice to Creditor
POA - Petition for Relief (RCW 11.94) /Power of Attorney
RGR - Registration of Guardianship
RTR - Registration of Trust /Trust Situs
SNT - Special Needs Trust
TDR - Trust/Estate Dispute Resolution
TRS - Trust
WLL - Will Only

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).