

King County Superior Court
2011 Annual Statistical Report

Department of Judicial Administration
Prepared by: Shiquan Liao, Ph.D., Statistician

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Report #: YR-2011

2011 Highlights

This 2011 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 2011 was slightly lower than that in 2010 (-3.0%). In 2011, the total filings (including “Matters Filed with Clerk”) were 73,136 cases. However, the change in filings was non-uniform across filing categories. In 2011, criminal filings continued to be low. The criminal filings were 5,986 cases in 2011, showing a decrease of 10.5% from 2010. General civil filings (case type 2, excluding Clerk’s filings and civil RALJ) and domestic filings (case type 3) in 2011 were almost the same as that in 2010 (-0.3%). Significant decrease in filings was observed in paternity, juvenile truancy and juvenile offender in 2011 when compared with previous years. Juvenile offender filings reached a historically low volume of 2,496 cases in 2011. Mental Illness filings increased significantly again in 2011. In addition, there were 2,018 post-disposition modifications in the domestic and paternity cases in 2011.
- **Resolutions** (Table 2). The total resolutions (including “Matters Filed with Clerk”) in 2011 were 75,451 cases, a 2.8% decrease from that in 2010. The total resolutions exceeded the total filings in 2011. In 2011, the disposition pace of criminal, general civil, juvenile offender, dependency, and truancy cases exceeded the filing pace. No significant gap was observed between the filings and resolutions for other categories in 2011.
- **Pending Caseload** (Table 3). The overall pending caseload at the end of 2011 was 19,797 cases, showing an overall decrease of 6% from 2010 (-6%). The pending caseload in the major categories of criminal, general civil, and juvenile offender decreased from a year ago, while an increase in pending caseload was observed in mental illness, juvenile dependency and ARY/CNS cases. No significant change was seen in the pending caseload in all other categories.
- **Trials**. Overall, there were 470 jury trials in 2011. There were 556 non-jury trials and 823 juvenile fact-findings in 2011. In addition, there were 427 trials by affidavits and stipulated trials in 2011.
- **KNT vs. SEA** (Table 4). Of the total 73,136 cases (including Matters filed with the Clerk) filed in 2011, 37% were KNT cases. However, no cases in the following categories were assigned to KNT: mental illness, juvenile offender. The KNT resolutions (36%, as a percentage of total resolution in KCSC) in 2011 were comparable with the KNT assignment (37%). At the end of 2011, the KNT pending caseload was 34% of that of the entire court, including all case categories. In 2011, filings at KNT in criminal, civil and domestic cases were 45%, 42% and 37% respectively.

Table 1. Annual Filings

Category	Annual Filings										2010-2011 Change (%)
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
Criminal	9,306	10,026	9,962	9,901	10,648	10,767	8,667	6,498	6,691	5,986	-705
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	24,566	27,304	27,567	26,915	25,469	26,020	27,577	29,821	27,632	27,542	-90
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	10,779	12,781	11,630	12,332	12,536	12,784	13,881	14,662	15,586	14,799	-787
Domestic	7,975	7,525	7,507	7,837	7,750	7,720	7,254	7,673	7,850	7,865	15
Probate	4,808	4,857	5,082	4,876	5,136	5,363	5,373	5,110	5,203	5,417	214
Guardianship	885	984	832	831	875	885	901	841	893	837	-56
Adoption	874	877	884	846	751	717	772	685	686	688	2
Paternity	1,754	1,555	1,508	1,394	1,199	1,421	1,147	1,233	1,189	1,039	-150
Mental Illness	2,068	2,189	2,317	2,342	2,225	2,397	2,420	2,727	3,059	3,506	447
Juvenile At-Risk Youth and Child-in-Need-of-Service	574	526	478	399	413	411	417	341	347	303	-44
Juvenile Dependency/Termination	955	975	968	887	945	971	888	903	1,038	1,060	22
Juvenile Truancy ⁽²⁾	1,796	1,874	1,755	1,803	2,204	2,111	2,512	2,083	1,614	1,350	-264
Juvenile Offender	5,208	5,497	4,788	4,085	4,178	3,954	3,803	3,967	3,356	2,496	-860
Criminal RALJ	306	308	261	287	247	225	214	180	176	191	15
Civil RALJ	115	140	112	119	93	95	73	86	64	57	-7
Total	71,969	77,418	75,651	74,854	74,669	75,841	75,899	76,810	75,384	73,136	-2,248
Post-disposition Modifications (domestic/paternity)			1,991	1,838	1,812	1,761	1,820	2,005	1,964	2,018	+54

(1) The statistics in this table include "Civil Matters Filed with Clerk", which are reported separately in the quarterly report. "Civil Matters Filed with Clerk" consist of those civil cases that require no or little judicial resources. This category includes the following cause codes of civil actions: Abstract of Judgment, Foreign Judgment, Tax Warrant, and Transcript of Judgment.

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

Table 2. Annual Resolutions

Category	Annual Resolutions										2010-2011 Change (%)
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
Criminal	9,928	8,959	9,516	9,478	9,937	11,051	9,619	7,644	6,521	6,285	-236
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	23,962	27,245	28,035	29,556	26,436	26,792	27,293	28,815	28,902	28,797	-105
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	10,775	12,772	11,619	12,334	12,536	12,784	13,900	14,662	15,590	14,799	-791
Domestic	8,340	7,749	7,659	7,689	7,825	7,705	7,194	7,530	7,781	7,952	171
Probate	4,733	4,735	4,984	4,688	4,864	5,438	5,704	5,036	5,222	5,435	213
Guardianship	856	839	821	743	793	971	1,027	911	947	824	-123
Adoption	848	913	834	830	781	800	809	710	698	715	17
Paternity	2,061	1,511	1,791	1,344	1,429	1,344	1,279	1,167	1,289	1,110	-179
Mental Illness	2,127	2,133	2,336	2,372	2,165	2,329	2,353	2,493	3,072	3,434	362
Juvenile At-Risk Youth and Child-in-Need-of-Service	540	488	526	423	426	404	400	365	437	317	-120
Juvenile Dependency/Termination	881	1,549	1,297	766	849	1,035	909	1,571	1,170	1,133	-37
Juvenile Truancy ⁽²⁾	1,734	2,407	2,149	1,412	1,856	2,293	2,828	2,725	2,211	1,765	-446
Juvenile Offender	4,932	5,073	4,662	3,766	3,958	3,699	3,525	3,252	3,471	2,645	-826
Criminal RALJ	377	349	304	260	268	238	226	198	218	187	-31
Civil RALJ	151	108	137	104	112	89	96	79	76	53	-23
Total	72,245	76,830	76,670	75,765	74,235	76,972	77,162	77,158	77,605	75,451	-2,154

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

Table 3. Year-end Pending Caseload

Category	Year-end Pending Caseload ⁽²⁾										2010-2011 ⁽³⁾
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Change (%)
Criminal	2,326	2,884	3,377	3,227	3,828	4,154	3,338	2,582	2,791	2,549	-242
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	11,598	11,902	11,838	9,625	8,941	8,719	9,262	11,299	9,969	9,238	-731
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	0	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Domestic	3,929	3,690	3,695	3,698	3,641	3,773	4,084	4,375	4,453	4,421	-32
Probate	784	859	821	915	1,082	994	621	635	579	559	-20
Guardianship	379	519	525	552	617	512	380	304	248	261	13
Adoption	357	331	374	394	365	288	253	225	215	192	-23
Paternity	816	901	624	689	468	558	442	523	436	377	-59
Mental Illness	101	158	123	92	136	209	301	465	463	530	67
Juvenile At-Risk Youth and Child-in-Need-of-Service	206	247	98	83	69	100	150	153	68	94	26
Juvenile Dependency/Termination	1,094	550	330	457	557	620	853	424	446	522	76
Juvenile Truancy	1,872	1,518	938	1,224	1,339	1,327	1,529	690	313	165	-148
Juvenile Offender	922	1,071	1,045	1,116	889	1,059	875	1,091	913	723	-190
Criminal RALJ	276	246	204	230	207	195	187	171	126	132	6
Civil RALJ	48	81	56	71	49	58	34	42	31	34	3
Total	24,708	24,967	24,050	22,373	22,188	22,566	22,309	22,979	21,051	19,797	-1,254

(1) The statistics in this table include "Civil Matters Filed with Clerk", which are reported separately in the quarterly report. "Civil Matters Filed with Clerk" consist of those civil cases that require no or little judicial resources. This category includes the following cause codes of civil actions: Abstract of Judgment, Foreign Judgment, Tax Warrant, and Transcript of Judgment.

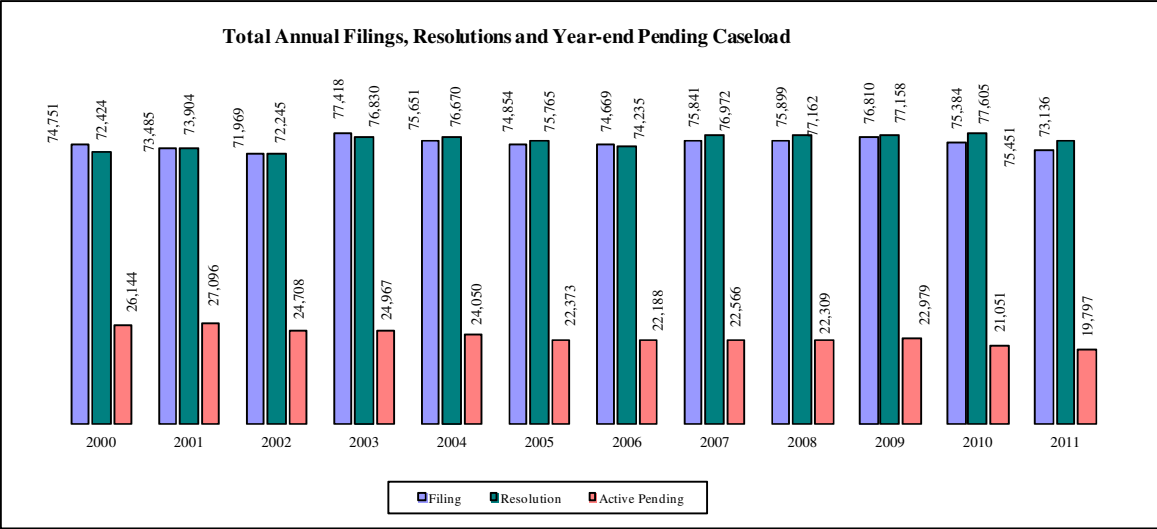
(2) Pending caseload does not include cases on suspense status.

(3) The percentage should be interpreted along with the number of cases. For those categories with small numbers, a large percentage does not necessarily indicate potential problem.

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

Category	2011 Filings			2011 Resolutions			2011 Year-end Pending Caseload		
	KNT (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)	KNT (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)	KNT (%)	SEA (%)	Total (n)
Criminal	45%	55%	5,986	39%	61%	6,285	52%	48%	2,549
Civil (excluding RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)	42%	52%	27,542	42%	58%	28,797	30%	70%	9,238
Civil Matters Filed with Clerk ⁽¹⁾	40%	60%	14,799	40%	60%	14,799	---	---	0
Domestic	37%	63%	7,865	37%	63%	7,952	40%	60%	4,421
Probate	22%	78%	5,417	22%	78%	5,435	15%	85%	559
Guardianship	36%	64%	837	39%	61%	824	36%	64%	261
Adoption	25%	75%	688	27%	73%	715	22%	78%	192
Paternity	54%	46%	1,039	50%	50%	1,110	55%	45%	377
Mental Illness	0%	100%	3,506	0%	100%	3,434	0%	100%	530
Juvenile At-Risk Youth and Child-in-Need-of-Service	48%	52%	303	49%	51%	317	36%	64%	94
Juvenile Dependency/Termination	52%	48%	1,060	53%	47%	1,133	44%	56%	522
Juvenile Truancy ⁽²⁾	57%	43%	1,350	50%	50%	1,765	51%	49%	165
Juvenile Offender	0%	100%	2,496	0%	100%	2,645	0%	100%	723
Criminal RALJ	8%	92%	191	9%	91%	187	11%	89%	132
Civil RALJ	14%	86%	57	5%	95%	53	12%	88%	34
Total	37%	63%	73,136	36%	54%	75,451	34%	66%	19,797

(1) The statistics in this table include "Civil Matters Filed with Clerk", which are reported separately in the quarterly report. "Civil Matters Filed with Clerk" consists of those civil cases that require little or no judicial resources. This category includes the following cause codes of civil actions: Abstract of Judgment, Foreign Judgment, Tax Warrant, and Transcript of Judgment.



Appendix Definition

Active Status

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

Adoption Cases

This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 5:

- Relinquishment (REL)
- Termination of Parent/Child Relationship (TER)
- Adoption (ADP)
- Miscellaneous (MSC)
- Name Change - Confidential (CHN)
- Initial Pre-Placement Report Filed with Clerk (PPR)

Annual Filings

Total number of new case filings during the calendar year (January 1 to December 31).

ANTRIAL

An “Assigned - No Trial” is a trial that has pre-trial motion time (PTM) and possibly voir dire time (VDT), but the trial was ended by plea, settlement or other dispositions before the opening statement or the impanel of a jury.

Case

A case is defined as a filing with an assigned case number (or a case number plus a defendant connection code in pre-1990 criminal filings).

Civil Cases (excl. RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)

Civil cases, excluding appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction and “Matters Filed with Clerk”. Civil cases include small claims as identified by the “Small Claim Track”. This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 2:

- Administrative Law Review (ALR)
- Change of Name - Non-Confidential (CHN)
- Collection (COL)
- Commercial (COM)
- Condemnation (CON)
- Appeals of Department of Licensing Revocation (DOC)
- Domestic Violence Protection (DVP)
- Emancipation of Minor (EOM)
- Foreclosure (FOR)
- Civil Harassment (HAR)
- Injunction (INJ)
- Other Malpractice (MAL)
- Medical Malpractice (MED)
- Meretricious Relationship (MER)
- Malicious Harassment (MHA)
- Miscellaneous (MSC)
- Minor Settlement (MST) - *as of 10/1/96, under Guardianship*
- Petition of Civil Commitment- Sexual Predator (PCC)
- Property Fairness (PFA)
- Personal Injury (PIN)
- Property Damage (PRP)
- Quiet Title (QTI)
- Small Claims (LCA/LCI on “Small Claim Track”)
- Seizure of Property from the Commission of a Crime (SPC)
- Seizure of Property Resulting from a Crime (SPR)
- Tort Motor Vehicle (TMV)
- Tort Other (TTO)
- Unlawful Detainer (UND)
- Wrongful Death (WDE)
- Writ of Habeas Corpus (WHC)
- Miscellaneous Writ (WMW)
- Writ of Mandamus (WRM)
- Writ of Restitution (WRR)
- Writ of Review (WRV)

Civil Matters Filed with Clerk

Filings with clerk (case numbers assigned), but requiring little or no judicial action. This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 2:

- Abstract of Judgment (ABJ)
- Foreign Judgment (FJU)
- Tax Warrant (TAX)
- Transcripts of Judgment (TRJ)

Civil RALJ Cases

Civil appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction (excluding small claims as identified by the “Small Claim Track”). Civil RALJ includes the following “cause-of-action” reporting categories:

- Lower Court Appeal - Civil and “Not a Small Claim”
- Lower Court Appeal - Infraction and “Not a Small Claim”

Note: The Civil RALJ cases are determined based on both SCOMIS “cause-of-action” code (LCA and LCI) within SCOMIS case type 2 and the “Small Claim Track”.

Completion

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

Criminal Cases (excl. RALJ)

Adult criminal cases, excluding appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction. This reporting category includes the following crime categories within SCOMIS case type 1:

- Homicide
- Sex Crime
- Robbery
- Assault
- Theft/Burglary
- Motor Vehicle Theft
- Controlled Substance
- Other Felony
- Others (Misdemeanor, Non-charge Case)

Criminal RALJ Cases

Criminal appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction. This reporting category includes all SCOMIS case type 1 cases that have an appeal from lower court field of “Yes”.

Domestic Cases

This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 3:

- Child Custody (CUS)
- Dissolution with Children (DIC)
- Dissolution without Children (DIN)
- Foreign Judgment (FJU)
- Annulment/Invalidity (INV)
- Modification (with a new case number) (MOD)
- Miscellaneous (MSC)
- Mandatory Wage Assignment (MWA)
- Out-of-State Child Custody (OSC)
- Reciprocal, Respondent-in-County (RIC)
- Reciprocal, Respondent-out-of-County (ROC)
- Legal Separation (SEP)

Guardianship Cases

This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 4:

- Guardianship/Estate (G/E)
- Guardianship (GND)
- Limited Guardianship (LGD)
- Minor Settlement (MST)

Jury Trial

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

Juvenile At-risk Youth/Child-in-Need of Service Cases

Juvenile dependency cases, excluding truancy cases. This reporting category includes following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 7:

- Alternative Residential Placement (ARP)
- At-Risk Youth (ARY)
- Child in Need of Service (CNS)

Juvenile Dependency Cases

Juvenile dependency cases, excluding truancy cases. This reporting category includes following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 7:

- Dependency (DEP)
- Termination (TER)

Juvenile Offender Cases

This reporting category includes the following crime categories in SCOMIS case type 8:

- Homicide
- Sex Crime
- Robbery
- Assault
- Theft/Burglary
- Motor Vehicle Theft
- Controlled Substance
- Other Felony
- Others (Misdemeanor, Non-charge Case)

Juvenile Truancy Cases

Mandatory truancy filings started on 10/01/1995. This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” code within SCOMIS case type 7:

- Truancy (TRU)

Mental Illness Cases

This reporting category includes all “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 6:

- Alcoholic Treatment (ALT)
- Mental Illness - Adult (MI)
- Mental Illness - Juvenile (MIJ)

Non-Jury Trial

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

Number of Trials

Occurrences of trials. If a case has multiple trials, all trials are reported. If multiple cases are tried together, it is reported as one trial where possible (see “Number of Cases Tried” for difference). The number of trials refer to number of jury and non-jury trials (including juvenile fact-findings).

Paternity Cases

This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 5:

- Modification (MOD)
- Paternity (PAT)
- Paternity/URESA/UIFSA (PUR)

Pending Case

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

Post-disposition Modifications

Petitions to modify parenting plan and/or support after the resolution of the original cases, based on the modification tracks opened during the reporting period.

Probate Cases

This reporting category includes the following “cause-of-action” codes within SCOMIS case type 4:

- Absentee (ABS)
- Disclaimer (DSC)
- Estate (EST)
- Foreign Will (FNW)
- Miscellaneous (MSC)
- Non-Probate Notice to Creditors (NNC)
- Will Only (WLL)

Resolution

A case is resolved if all issues in the complaint are fully adjudicated.

Suspended Case

A case is placed in suspense status from active status during the reporting period.

Suspense Status

A case is on suspense status if it is on warrant, appeal, stay, mediation, arbitration (“Deferred Prosecution” is not a suspense status, but is treated as a resolution).

Trial

A hearing set before a judge or jury in which all the issues in the case are meant to be resolved. A trial normally includes opening statements to the court or jury stating what evidence will show, introduction of witnesses and exhibits for direct and cross examination, final arguments to the court or jury in which counsel argue both the evidence and the law, and judgment by the court or jury stating what the facts of the case are and what law applies to the facts. In a jury case, it also includes the selection of the jury. A trial can be held for one or more cases. A single trial may be held to adjudicate more than one case (as defined above).