



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New regional payment plan allows for easier, less expensive way to pay traffic fines

Beginning October 1, 2017, individuals with traffic-related fines in multiple jurisdictions in King County will have an easier and less expensive way to pay court-mandated fines from multiple courts through the new Unified Payment (UP) Program. This new program also lifts the hold on a person's driver's license before the fines are completely paid off.

"This is a great program that will allow people a convenient, low-cost way to quickly lift the hold on their driver's license," said LaTricia Kinlow, Court Administrator for the Tukwila Municipal Court. "Suspended licenses are a huge barrier to employment and other obligations and often lead to even more fines and court appearances. With this program, it's one stop shopping for people who have fines in more than one court, and as soon as they make their first payment we lift the hold on their license."

The program is a collaboration between the district and municipal courts in King County. The UP Program allows people with fines in multiple jurisdictions in King County the ability to pay off their obligations without going to a collection agency. Because the program only charges a flat fee of \$7.00 per month, individuals save costs that would have been accrued through a collection agency, which assesses collection fees and compounding interest as high as 19%. Monthly payments as low as \$25 are accepted and the agency will work with court customers to determine an appropriate amount on an individual basis.

"Court fines can have a snowballing effect that set people up for failure; particularly people with little economic means," commented Karen Campbell, Senior Attorney,

Northwest Justice Project Vancouver, and an appointee to the committee created by the Washington State Legislature to work on the creation of a statewide relicensing program. "The King County UP Program represents a positive first step toward reducing barriers faced by low income individuals. While we continue to work toward a statewide program to assist low income individuals throughout Washington, and appreciate the work by the Attorney General on that project, we are equally appreciative of those at the local level, like those in King County, who are proactively working toward this goal."

In 2016, 66,000 people in King County had court fines that could lead to automatic suspension of their driver's license. The average fine obligation for these individuals was \$315. Many of these individuals have multiple fines in multiple courts, which required two or more separate payment plans for each court, often through a collection agency charging both interest and collection fees.

"The courts in King County have a responsibility to administer justice every day. This program collectively shows the mercy side of the court, and I am proud to be a part of this effort to provide another service to our customers. We want our customers to know that we can and do dispense justice in a merciful way," said Kinlow.

Participating courts include King County District Court and the municipal courts of Algona, Auburn, Bellevue, Black Diamond, Bothell, Burien, Des Moines, Duvall, Enumclaw, Federal Way, Hunts Point, Issaquah, Kenmore, Kent, Kirkland, Lake Forest Park, Maple Valley, Mercer Island, Newcastle, Normandy Park, North Bend, Pacific, Redmond, Renton, Sammamish, SeaTac, Seattle, Shoreline, Skykomish, Snoqualmie, Tukwila, Woodinville, and Yarrow Point. Each of these courts operate their own relicensing programs that allow individuals with fines in their court to participate in similar payment programs and/or payment alternatives.

"We are aware and excited about the effort towards a statewide consolidated payment program, and we look forward to hearing what the committee proposes. We just believe it is better for our customers if we start now rather than later," said Judge Kimberly Walden, presiding judge of the Tukwila Municipal Court."

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King County District and Municipal Courts

UNIFIED PAYMENT (UP) PROGRAM

Beginning October 1, 2017, individuals with traffic-related fines in multiple jurisdictions in King County will have an easier and less expensive way to pay court-mandated fines through the new Unified Payment (UP) Program. This program also lifts the hold on a person's driver's license before the fines are paid in full.

How it works

1. Court customers with suspended licenses due to failure to respond/pay contact a court where they have fines to receive the necessary documentation needed in order to complete the online application.
2. Using the documentation provided by the court, the customer will submit an online application.
3. The payment agency works with individuals to determine a realistic payment plan, as low as \$25.00 per month, which includes a \$7.00 fee.
4. Once the payment agency receives the first installment, participating courts will be notified and they will notify the Washington State Department of Licensing that the hold can be removed from the person's driver's license.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is this program needed? Shouldn't people just pay their fines?

Court fines can be a barrier for people, particularly those with limited economic means. In 2016, 66,000 people in King County had court fines that could have led to automatic suspension of their driver's license. Because fines are often collected through a collection agency, the baseline fines can grow exponentially due to interest and collection fees. This program allows people to pay back the fines without collection and interest fees, and lifts the hold on the license at the first payment. Through the traditional collection agency process, the hold is not lifted until all fines are recovered.

What about people with fines in only one court?

All District and Municipal Courts in King County operate relicensing programs that have similar payment and relicensing opportunities for individual court customers. This plan allows a consolidated payment plan for people with fines in multiple courts in King County. People with fines in only one jurisdiction should contact that court for information on their relicensing program.

What if someone stops paying?

If a customer defaults on the UP Program, the payment agency sends a notice to the court, which then removes the case from the program. At that point, the court may assign the case to the collection agency and notify the Washington Department of Licensing to issue a hold on the license.

Do I have to contact each court?

No. You can go to any King County District or Municipal Court to get a copy of your case history and the UP Program information.

Who is the payment agency?

Linebarger Coggan Blair & Sampson (LCBS), LLP

What courts are participating in the UP Program?

Participating courts include King County District Court and the Municipal Courts of Algona, Auburn, Bellevue, Black Diamond, Bothell, Burien, Carnation, Clyde Hill, Des Moines, Enumclaw, Federal Way, Hunts Point, Issaquah, Kenmore, Kent, Kirkland, Lake Forest Park, Maple Valley, Medina, Mercer Island, Newcastle, Normandy Park, North Bend, Pacific, Redmond, Renton, Sammamish, SeaTac, Seattle, Shoreline, Skykomish, Tukwila, Woodinville and Yarrow Point.

Can I use the UP Program to pay a fine in another county?

No. At this time this program is only available in King County courts.

Why is there a \$7.00 monthly fee?

Is that really less expensive than a collection agency?

The \$7.00 monthly fee pays for LCBS to administer the UP Program. They work directly with clients to identify a customized payment plan, and interact with the courts to make the program successful. See the examples below for a breakdown comparing the UP Program with a collection agency.

| REGULAR COLLECTION COSTS | | PROPOSED UP PROGRAM | |
|--|------------|--|------------|
| 36 Equal Monthly Payments of \$39.53 each | | 36 Equal Monthly Payments of \$34.78 each | |
| Violation | \$1,000.00 | Violation | \$1,000.00 |
| Collection Fee (19%) | 190.00 | Collection Fee (0%) | — |
| Interest during repayment period (12%) | 232.86 | Interest during repayment period (0%) | — |
| Set-up Fee | — | Set-up Fee | — |
| Monthly Fees | — | Monthly Fees (\$7.00/month) | 252.00 |
| Total that consumer will pay \$1,422.86 | | Total consumer will pay \$1,252.00 | |
| 56 Equal Monthly Payments of \$24.99 each | | 56 Equal Monthly Payments of \$24.86 each | |
| Violation | \$1,000.00 | Violation | \$1,000.00 |
| Collection Fee (19%) | 190.00 | Collection Fee (0%) | — |
| Interest during repayment period (12%) | 433.98 | Interest during repayment period (0%) | — |
| Set-up Fee | — | Set-up Fee | — |
| Monthly Fees | — | Monthly Fees (\$7.00/month) | 392.00 |
| Total that consumer will pay \$1,623.98 | | Total consumer will pay \$1,392.00 | |

For more information, please contact 206-433-1840.



King County District and Municipal Courts

UNIFIED PAYMENT (UP) PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Beginning October 1, 2017, individuals with traffic-related fines in multiple jurisdictions in King County will have an easier and less expensive way to pay court-mandated fines through the new Unified Payment (UP) Program. This program also lifts the hold on a person's driver's license before the fines are paid in full.

Participation Requirements

1. Must have two or more tickets in two or more courts in King County.
2. Tickets must have a hold or potential hold against the individual's drivers license.
3. Must have an ability to pay (those without the ability to pay should contact the court in which the ticket is filed).
4. Must take care of any outstanding warrants issued by a court in King County.

Applying for the Program

A program application can be obtained by contacting the payment agency at 1-844-544-5242, online at www.KingCountyUP.com, or by contacting any court of limited jurisdiction within King County.

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|-------------------------|---------|--------------|----------------------------|-----|--------------|
| Algona (Pacific) | PAC | 253-929-1140 | Maple Valley (Kent) | KEM | 253-856-5730 |
| Auburn (King County) | AUM/KCD | 206-205-9200 | Medina (Kirkland) | KIM | 425-587-3160 |
| Bellevue (King County) | KCD | 206-205-9200 | Mercer Island | MIS | 206-275-7604 |
| Black Diamond | BDM | 360-886-7784 | Newcastle (Mercer Island) | MIS | 206-275-7604 |
| Bothell | BTM | 425-487-5587 | Normandy Park (Des Moines) | NPP | 206-878-4597 |
| Burien (King County) | KCD | 206-205-9200 | North Bend (Issaquah) | IQM | 425-837-3170 |
| Carnation (King County) | KCD | 206-205-9200 | Pacific | PAC | 253-929-1140 |
| Clyde Hill (Kirkland) | KIM | 425-587-3160 | Redmond (King County) | KCD | 206-205-9200 |
| Des Moines | DMM | 206-878-4597 | Renton | REM | 425-430-6550 |
| Duvall (King County) | KCD | 206-205-9200 | Sammamish (King County) | KCD | 206-205-9200 |
| Enumclaw | ECM | 360-825-7771 | SeaTac | STM | 206-973-4610 |
| Federal Way | FWM | 253-835-3000 | Seattle | SMC | 206-684-5600 |
| Hunts Point (Kirkland) | KIM | 425-587-3160 | Shoreline (King County) | KCD | 206-205-9200 |
| Issaquah | IQM | 425-837-3170 | Skykomish (King County) | KCD | 206-205-9200 |
| Kenmore (King County) | KCD | 206-205-9200 | Snoqualmie (Issaquah) | IQM | 206-205-9200 |
| Kent | KEM | 253-856-5730 | Tukwila | TKM | 206-433-1840 |
| King County | KCD | 206-205-9200 | Woodinville (Kirkland) | KIM | 425-587-3160 |
| Kirkland | KIM | 425-587-3160 | Yarrow Point (Kirkland) | KIM | 425-587-3160 |
| Lake Forest Park | LFM | 206-364-7711 | | | |

For more information, please contact any of the courts listed above or call 206-433-1840.

