



District and Municipal Court Management Association Executive Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 18th, 2025 - 10:00 AM

In-Person:
Tukwila Justice Center
15005 Tukwila International Blvd
Tukwila, WA 98188

Join Zoom Meeting:
<https://wacourts.zoom.us/j/85916261910>

AGENDA

Item	Agenda Item		Approximate Time
1.	Welcome and Introductions	Frankie Peters, President	10:00
2.	Adoption of Agenda	Frankie Peters, President	10:10
3.	Approval of Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan. 21, 2025 	Candace Enders, Secretary	10:15
4.	Treasurer's Report	Juanita Sifuentes, Treasurer	10:20
5.	Liaison Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMCJA AOC CSD Liaison CLJ-CMS AOC Project Updates MPA DOL 	Representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judge Jeffrey Goodwin Angie Autry Angie Autry Lillian Hawkins Regina Alexander Carla Weaver, DMCMA Committee Liaisons 	10:30
6.	Standing Committee Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education & Conference Technology Membership Legislative / Rules Long Range Planning By Laws / Policy & Procedure Courts Helping Courts Diversity, Equity & Inclusion 	Chair, Co-Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amy Knutsen, Bryan Farrell Ellen Attebery, Andrew McSeveney Sherri Hansen, Kati Dorman Patrick Wells, Maryam Olsen, Kati Dorman Therese Murphy, Mary Beth Phillips Therese Murphy, Mary Beth Phillips Dee Morrill, LaTricia Kinlow Misty Robison, Kris Thompson 	11:00
7.	State Committee Reports	Representatives	11:30

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BJA • Court Management Council • BJA Court Education Committee • BJA Public Engagement • BJA Court Security Task Force • BJA Legislative Committee • BJA Alternatives to Incarceration • Data Dissemination Committee • Interbranch Advisory Committee • Gender & Justice Commission • Minority & Justice Commission • Interpreter Commission • Pattern Forms • JIS Codes • JISC • CLJ-CMS PSC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LaTricia Kinlow, Frankie Peters • Frankie Peters, Therese Murphy • Margaret Yetter, Amy Knutsen • Desiree Ochocinski • Suzanne Elsner • Frankie Peters • Raylene Heutink, Brian Gleason • Paulette Revoir • LaTricia Kinlow • LaTricia Kinlow • LaTricia Kinlow • Annalisa Mai • Justin Shifflett • Patsy Robinson, Valerie Marino, Deannie Martin • Paulette Revoir, Frankie Peters • Margaret Yetter, Suzanne Elsner, Frankie Peters 		
8.	<p>New Business</p> <p>Old Business</p>	Frankie Peters, President	12:00	
9.	Adjourn	Frankie Peters, President	12:10	

Next Board Meeting – Tuesday, May 20, 2025 @ 12:00pm

2025



PUBLIC OUTREACH TOOLKIT

ENHANCING RESPECT FOR THE COURTS AND COURT ADMINISTRATION

COURT MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



WASHINGTON
COURTS
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

Introduction

3

Court Management Council Members 2024–2025

4

1

Social Media and the Courts

5

2

Purpose and Meaning of Courts

13

3

Media and Public Outreach

17

4

Virtual Hearings – Do’s and Don’ts

20

5

School Outreach

23

6

Employment Opportunities in the Courts

26

7

Court Governance and Management

32

8

Court Operations Advocacy

41

Introduction

Judicial officers and employees of the court need to have the necessary support and tools to carry out their duties efficiently. The courts must provide open access to court services for all persons; manage the business of the court in a timely manner that promotes efficiency and transparency; provide an opportunity for fair, equitable and timely resolution of cases; and exercising leadership. The courts should collaborate with other justice partners to develop strategies that join the interests of all three branches of government, recognizing that the court cannot operate in isolation, while, at the same time, maintaining independence.

The latest [State of the State Courts Survey](#) from the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) reveals the public perception of and confidence in state courts continues to decline. NCSC focus groups indicated that providing more information on courts, such as the availability of limited funding; the impact of our judicial branch within the justice system; the work that judges and court administration do; and treatment court and diversion information improved public perception of the courts.

In October 2023, the Court Management Council (CMC) discussed developing an initiative from the 2023 *Better Together Presiding Judge and Administrator Forum* themes of respect, customer service, communication and relationship building, reducing resolution time, and procedural fairness. As a result, the CMC embarked on a project to provide a toolkit for courts to communicate and market their efforts to the public and to funding authorities. Courts also need a way to deal with social media comments. The public is often unaware of how courts work and do not realize courts are separate from legislative and executive branch authorities, such as law enforcement, prosecutors, county/city commissioners, and state legislators.

As a result of these conversations, the CMC created this toolkit for the public and the courts. The toolkit and resources will be updated periodically.

Court Management Council Members 2024–2025

Dawn Marie Rubio, Co-Chair

State Court Administrator and Director
Administrative Office of the Courts

Fona Sugg, Co-Chair

Association of Washington Superior Court Administrators (AWSCA)
Administrator, Chelan County Superior Court

Linnea Anderson

Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators (WAJCA)
Administrator, San Juan County Juvenile Court

TJ Bohl

Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators (WAJCA)
Administrator, Pierce County Juvenile Court

Tim Fitzgerald

Washington State Association of County Clerks (WSACC)
Spokane County Clerk

Chris Gaddis

Association of Washington Superior Court Administrators (AWSCA)
Administrator, Pierce County Superior Court

LaTricia Kinlow

District and Municipal Court Management Association (DMCMA) (Alternate)
Administrator, Tukwila Municipal Court

Erin Lennon

Clerk, Supreme Court (Alternate)

Ashley Lipford,

Court Administrator, Supreme Court

Therese Murphy

District and Municipal Court Management Association (DMCMA)
Administrator, Yakima County District Court

Frankie Peters

District and Municipal Court Management Association (DMCMA)
Court Executive Officer, Thurston County District Court

Susan Speiker

Washington State Association of County Clerks (WSACC)
Okanogan County Clerk

Rikki Thompson

Association of Washington Superior Court Administrators (AWSCA)
(Alternate)
Administrator, Pacific County Superior Court

Tristen Worthen

Court of Appeals Division III
Clerk/Administrator

STAFF

Scott Ahlf

Administrative Office of the Courts
Chief Legal Counsel and Director, Court Services Division

Kate Rowell

Administrative Office of the Courts
Administrative Assistant to the Director, Court Services Division

CONTRIBUTING CMC MEMBERS 2023–2024

Ellen Attebery

District and Municipal Court Management Association (DMCMA) (Alternate)
Administrator, Puyallup & Milton Municipal Courts

Melissa Beaton

Washington State Association of County Clerks (WSACC)
Skagit County Clerk

Michelle Cook

Administrator, Skagit County Superior Court

Tori Peterson

Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators (WAJCA)
Administrator, Spokane County Juvenile Court

Cheryl Stone

Association of Washington Superior Court Administrators (AWSCA)
(Alternate)
Administrator, Clark County Superior Court

1

Social Media and the Courts

Social Media and the Courts

Resources for Court Communicators

According to the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), the rise of social media has presented both opportunities and challenges for courts. With **roughly 72 percent of Americans using social media**, platforms like Facebook, X (Twitter), YouTube, and others have become essential communication tools.

With support from the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA), the NCSC encourages courts to utilize social media to:

- Provide real-time information about the court, including services, events, and news.
- Uphold the integrity of the court process through transparency and accountability.
- Increase public engagement.
- Improve the administration of justice.
- Counter false information.
- Share thought-provoking and engaging content that informs the public about issues, services and processes, and
- Promote positive work of the court system and its judges.

Social Media and the Courts

Social media is here to stay. While these platforms may present unique communications challenges, courts can successfully use social media to educate the public with proper planning and monitoring. Social media plays an important role in court communications and offers many benefits, including the ability to help:

- **Increase public trust and confidence.**

According to NCSC's State of the State Courts survey, public trust in the courts is waning. This is very dangerous to our democracy and must be met with increased transparency and accessibility. Social media provides a 24-7 outlet for courts to communicate with the public on a wide range of topics, including court proceedings, courtroom protocols, and special hours and closures.

- **Position the court as a news source and verified voice.**

"If you are not telling your story, someone else is." Social media enables courts to control the narrative by telling their own stories. Instead of relying solely on news organizations, courts can report real-time updates, share unbiased facts, and shape important conversations. Human-interest stories, such as an adoption day or drug court graduation, can be shared even when traditional news outlets don't cover them. Social media may also attract reporters searching for story ideas. See, [Washington State Courts - News, Reports, Court Information](#).

- **Amplify crisis communications efforts and assist in combating disinformation.**

As the nation witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic, courts can use social media to quickly relay information about crises and rapidly changing situations, like weather events, civil disorder, or biological emergencies. Similarly, having a social media presence allows a court to monitor events, themes, and conversations that may result in damaging misinformation or disinformation. It also provides a way for the court to combat false information where most misinformation and disinformation originates. For more information on courts and disinformation, visit [NCSC's disinformation resources](#) and request a copy of *Combating Disinformation: A Playbook Template for State Courts*.

Social Media Tips for Court Communicators

Courts communicators can leverage social media platforms to communicate, engage with the public, and reinforce their standing.

Here are some valuable tips to help court communicators optimize their communication efforts:

Terms of Use Policies

Courts should establish a Terms of Use policy on their social media pages to foster a constructive and respectful environment. A Terms of Use policy serves multiple functions, including providing clear guidelines for user behavior, protecting the court from potential legal issues related to inappropriate content, ensuring transparency and consistency in enforcing rules, safeguarding the integrity of the judicial system, and promoting a safe and positive online community for users.

Examples of Terms of Use Policies

- [Delaware Courts Social Media Policy](#)
- [Nebraska Courts Social Media Handbook](#)
- [Michigan Trial Court Standards and Guidelines for Websites and Social Media](#)
- [United States District Court Northern District of Illinois Social Media and Social Networking Policy](#)
- [Washington Courts Law Library Social Media Guidelines](#)

RESOURCES FOR COURTS

- [“Disarming Disinformation – Guidelines for Courts to Combat Threats” Trends in State Courts Publication, 2023](#)
- [“Courting Public Trust and Confidence: Effective Communication in the Digital Age” Policy Paper from CCJ/COSCA, 2023](#)
- [Media Guide from the National Association for Court Management and the Conference of Court Public Information Officers, 2020](#)
- [“Juror Responsibilities Regarding the Internet and Social Media” downloadable poster](#)

Guidelines for Judges

Judges should be aware of the impact and implications of engaging on social media. Please review the [Washington State Code of Judicial Conduct](#) for specific guidance.

Here are some general considerations judges should keep in mind:

1. Professional conduct

Judges should maintain a high level of professionalism and integrity on social media platforms. They should adhere to the same ethical standards and codes of conduct that apply in the courtroom.

2. Impartiality and neutrality

Judges should avoid expressing personal opinions on matters that may come before them in court. They should refrain from engaging in political discussions or making controversial statements that could compromise their impartiality.

1 SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE COURTS

3. Privacy and confidentiality

Judges must be cautious about sharing confidential or sensitive information on social media. They should not disclose details about ongoing cases, parties involved, or any other information that could violate privacy rights or compromise the integrity of the judicial process.

4. Respect and decorum

Judges should always maintain respectful and courteous interactions on social media. They should avoid engaging in heated debates, arguments, or personal attacks. Engaging in respectful discussions and providing accurate legal information can contribute positively to public understanding of the judicial system.

5. Separation of personal and professional life

Judges should consider creating separate accounts for personal and professional use. This helps to maintain a clear distinction between their private lives and their role as a judge, reducing the risk of misinterpretation or confusion.

6. Awareness of impact

Judges should be mindful of the potential impact of their social media presence. Even if their personal accounts are private, their actions and statements can still have an impact on public perception of the judiciary. Judges should be aware that their online activity can influence public confidence in the fairness and impartiality of the court.

7. Personal social media accounts

While judges are not obligated to have social media accounts, it is important for judges to understand their potential influence and conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary. Personal social media accounts may present a security risk if personal information related to location or vacation plans are shared.

RESOURCES FOR JUDGES

- [“Social Media and Judicial Ethics Update” from NCSC Center for Judicial Ethics, updated 2024](#)
- [Center for Judicial Ethics Publications](#)
- [“Judges’ Presence on Social Media: Dangers of Posting, Liking, and Sharing” from the Journal of High Technology Law at Suffolk University Law School, 2022](#)
- [“To Post or Not To Post: Judges’ Social Media Predicament” from the Columbia Journal of Transitional Law, 2021](#)

Guidelines for Jurors

Jurors should be aware of the potential impact of social media on their role and responsibilities during a trial. Here are some key points jurors should know about social media:

1. Impartiality and fairness

Jurors have a crucial duty to remain impartial and make decisions based solely on the evidence presented in the courtroom. Engaging on social media during a trial can expose jurors to external information, opinions, or discussions that may bias their judgment or influence their decision-making process.

1 SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE COURTS

2. Avoiding external influence

Posting about the trial or discussing it on social media can inadvertently expose jurors to outside influences and opinions that are not based on the evidence presented in the courtroom. These influences can compromise the fairness of the trial and undermine the integrity of the process.

3. Protecting confidentiality

Jurors have a responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of the trial proceedings. Sharing details or opinions about the trial on social media violates the court's instructions and can jeopardize the rights of the parties involved.

4. Preserving the integrity of the process

Jurors should understand that their actions on social media can have serious consequences, such as mistrials or appeals. It is essential to respect the legal process and the rights of all parties by refraining from discussing or posting about the trial online.

5. Respect for judicial authority

Jurors should adhere to the instructions provided by the judge regarding social media usage during the trial. Ignoring these instructions can lead to legal consequences and undermine the authority of the court.

RESOURCES FOR JURORS

- [Jurors, the Internet and Social Media](#) from NCSC's Center for Jury Studies
- [Juror Responsibilities Regarding the Internet and Social Media Poster](#)
- [Juror Responsibilities Concerning the Internet and Social Media Video](#)
- [Tiny Chat 120: Jurors and Social Media](#)

Additional Resources

- [National Association of Court Management \(NACM\) Social Media Policy and Guidelines \(Adopted 2019\)](#)

NACM PODCASTS

- [Courts And Confidence: What Do We Know About How the Public Perceives The Courts? \(2022\)](#)
- [Social Media and the Courts: How Do We Deal with This Growing Reality? \(2019\)](#)

CONTACT NACM

- socialmedia@ncsc.org

Administrative Social Media Guidelines for Court Use

Goals

The goal is to inform, educate, interest, and provide customer service through timely dissemination of court news and information of interest to the court and legal community.

- Provide real-time information about the court, including services, events, and news.
- Uphold the integrity of the court process through transparency and accountability.
- Increase public engagement.
- Improve the administration of justice.
- Counter false information.
- Share thought-provoking and engaging content that informs the public about issues, services and processes.
- Promote positive work of the court system, its judges and their staff.
- Enhance public trust and confidence in the court system.

Guidelines

- Create a standard of accessibility in accordance with the court's language access plan.
- Each social media platform being used shall include a disclaimer and a terms-of service statement. The terms-of-service statement shall state the policy regarding comments and the parameters for any participation that will be allowed.
- Any links shall be related to the court's functions or shall be necessary for the proper performance of a court function (i.e. other court sites, legislature, local and state bar associations, and state and local agencies).
- Content must be relevant to the work and activities of the court (news articles, video, photos).
- Content must contain links back to the court's corresponding website when possible.
- Images and videos should be stored on the court's website or other court-owned storage accounts, not on personal media storage accounts.
- Related to social media posts for therapeutic courts that would consist of participant photos, or videos from court proceedings or therapeutic court activities, consider securing a waiver from the participant.
- A method for feedback shall be made available, when appropriate.

General Posting Tips

- Post a variety of content (information graphics, quotes, events, statistics, program highlights) rather than only links.
- List relevant state or county pages in your favorites section.
- When referencing programs or agencies on Facebook, use the @ symbol first to "tag" them in the update.
- Post regularly. Stagnant and dead accounts create a perception that the judiciary is unresponsive to the public.

1 SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE COURTS

- Develop a strategy, learn about your audience, develop a posting calendar, reinforce your identity, be creative and leverage holidays or virtual events, be interactive and engage, humanize the courts and staff, and analyze your post performance.
- Post strategically to maximize potential readers. Multiple posts at one time increase the chance that your content will not be read by followers.

Content Ideas

- Individual directives and policies of the court's judges governing motion and trial practice, scheduling, courtroom etiquette, check-in, etc.
- How to access public information in a register of actions.
- Listing of online services.
- Frequently asked questions.
- Employment opportunities.
- Showcase new programming or updates to existing programs.
- Develop "series" posts which are intended to inform your audience on all aspects of a specific topic over a defined period.
- Develop posts around legally significant days throughout the year. (i.e., Law Day, May 1, Judiciary Day in September, Constitution Day, September 17, Probation Awareness month in July, Therapeutic Court Awareness month in April).

Posting Employment Opportunities

- Use social media when your court is finding it difficult to attract well qualified candidates or when you are more likely to find candidates with specific qualifications using social media. Courts may want to use social media to recruit for all positions.
- Tell your court's story on an ongoing basis, illustrating the great work your employees do.
- Use good judgment when using personal social media accounts during work hours. Under guidance from the Office of Government Ethics, employees' use of personal social media accounts on official time is allowed if it is "in an honest effort to perform official duties."
- Provide hyperlinks on social media sites that lead the user back to your agency's official website

Employment Opportunity Posting Tips

- Mix recruitment with storytelling.
- Use social media strategically to reach a larger applicant pool.
- Encourage frequent updates and a two-way information exchange through social media:
- Accept and respond to questions on social media. Publicly addressing individuals' comments and concerns soon after those concerns appear shows that your court is transparent and active online, and that your social media platforms are a good forum for sharing information.

Additional Resources

- [Courting Public Trust and Confidence: Effective Communication in the Digital Age from CCJ/COSCA, 2023](#)
- [Michigan Court Guidelines for Social Media Usage](#)
- [Infographic from National Center for State Courts](#)
- [Michigan Court Guidelines for Social Media Usage](#)
- [Social Media in Employment Recruiting](#)

2

Purpose and Meaning of Courts



Purpose and Meaning of Courts

The courts in Washington play a fundamental role in upholding justice, interpreting laws, and resolving disputes within the state. Understanding the structure and function of the courts in Washington is essential for all citizens to effectively exercise their rights and participate in the legal system. As court leaders, it is imperative we understand and are able to articulate the purpose and meaning of courts to members of our communities. Here's a Civic 101 introduction to understanding the court system in Washington.

The Constitution divides the government into three separate and equal branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. This structure allows a balance of power and provides for the ability of each branch to respond to the actions of other branches in a system of checks and balances. The independence of the judiciary shall be guaranteed, and all institutions must respect and observe this independence.

The judicial branch of government exists to provide an impartial forum for the resolution of disputes, ensuring the rule of law and protection of individual rights. Courts exist to do justice, to guarantee liberty, to enhance social order, to provide equal protection, and to ensure due process of law.

The judiciary must ensure that judicial proceedings and court services are conducted fairly and that the rights of the parties are respected. This is a crucial role of judicial officers and all employees of the court in providing and maintaining justice, as each decision and service impact life, freedoms, rights, duties, and property of citizens.

The State and local legislative authorities have a duty to provide adequate resources to enable the judiciary to properly serve its jurisdiction and the community. This ensures that judicial officers and employees of the court have the necessary support and tools to carry out their duties efficiently. This includes providing open access to court processes for all persons; management of the business of the court in a manner that promotes efficiency and transparency; the opportunity for fair and timely resolution. In order to serve their communities effectively, judges and court managers must exercise leadership among other justice partners, thereby developing strategies that join the interests of all three branches of government, recognizing that the court cannot operate in isolation, while, at the same time, but must also maintain its independence as a separate branch of government.

Structure of the Courts

1. Supreme Court

At the top of the judicial hierarchy in Washington is the Supreme Court, which is the state's highest appellate court. It has the authority to review decisions made by lower courts.

2. Court of Appeals

Below the Supreme Court is the Court of Appeals, which hears appeals from lower courts, such as superior courts and certain administrative agencies.

3. Superior Courts

Superior Courts are trial courts of general jurisdiction in Washington. They handle civil cases involving disputes over large sums of money, felony criminal cases, family law matters, probate, and more.

2 PURPOSE AND MEANING OF COURTS

4. District Courts

District Courts are courts of limited jurisdiction, handling matters such as traffic violations, misdemeanors, and civil cases involving smaller amounts of money.

5. Municipal Courts

Municipal Courts are also courts of limited jurisdiction and have jurisdiction over violations of city ordinances, traffic infractions, and misdemeanors occurring within city limits.

6. Specialty Courts

Many jurisdictions in Washington have specialty courts (also called therapeutic or treatment courts) like drug courts, mental health courts, and veterans' courts, which are sub-divisions of the Superior Courts or Courts of Limited Jurisdiction and focus on specific issues and provide alternative approaches to traditional court proceedings.

Role of the Courts

- **Interpreting laws**
Courts interpret and apply laws passed by the Washington State Legislature, ensuring consistency and fairness in legal rulings.
- **Dispensing justice**
Courts serve as impartial forums for resolving disputes between parties, whether they are individuals, businesses, or government entities.
- **Protecting rights**
Courts safeguard the rights and liberties of citizens, ensuring due process and equal protection under the law.
- **Enforcing orders**
Courts enforce judgments and orders, including those related to child custody, property disputes, and criminal sentences.

Access to Justice

- **Court resources**
Washington courts provide [various resources](#) to assist individuals in navigating the legal system, including self-help centers, online forms, and informational materials.
- **Interpreter services**
Courts offer [interpreter services](#) for individuals with limited English proficiency to ensure fair and accurate communication during proceedings.
- **Legal aid**
[Legal aid](#) organizations and pro bono programs help low-income individuals access legal representation and navigate the court process.
- **Alternative dispute resolution**
Washington encourages [alternative dispute resolution](#) methods like mediation and arbitration to resolve conflicts outside of traditional court proceedings.

Additional Resources

- [Video: Washington State Judicial Branch](#)
- [NCSC White Board Video – State Courts](#)
- [Washington State Supreme Court Interpreter and Language Access Commission](#)
- [How Courts Work \(The American Bar Association\)](#)
- [Purposes and Responsibilities \(National Association for Court Management\)](#)

3

Media and Public Outreach

Media and Public Outreach

The courts need to ensure that they are accessible and responsive to media inquiries. The court does this function in several different ways. State law mandates that courts are open to the public and media during hearings, unless the court has a specific reason directing the hearing to be closed to the public and media. Additionally, several county agencies are regularly contacted by the media concerning court matters.

Most of these agencies have a dedicated public affairs officer. Normally the media is looking for information on recent arrests dealing with certain crimes, First Appearance docket, or jail status. It is important for the court to ensure timely docket dissemination to the appropriate agencies, so they are in a position to answer media inquiries. This supports transparency of court actions.

The court should coordinate with the various agencies with whom the media will contact for information on a legal matter. These agencies are the County Public Affairs or Communications Director, the County Clerk's Office, and the Police Public Affairs officer, just to name a few. Finally, the court should develop a policy to share information with the Media.

A few guidelines when working with the media:

- Be transparent.
- Be accurate in the information passed.
- Be responsive to the media request.
- Be timely on responses.
- Have a dedicated PIO (Public Information Officer) or spokesperson so the media is not hunting or talking to the wrong people.

General press interview tips for judges:

- Develop relationships with reporters BEFORE being in the news.
- Always return reporters' phone calls.
- Be prepared for any interview. Think both about what you want to say and what you need to avoid.
- Never say "no comment;" explain why commenting would be inappropriate.
- Don't go "off the record" unless you know and trust the reporter.
- Think fast, talk slow.

Media training and public information training is important. So is the preparation of a Public Records Request. Know the difference in the public outreach response on a Public Records Request or a court document request versus a court administrative records request. Another important aspect of working with the media is to be proactive in press releases on changes in court operations, procedures, and documents and then display this information on the court website.

There are several ways for the court to work with the media as part of the public outreach program. The Court staff can publish editorials informing the public on unique situations such as COVID-19 restrictions in the courthouse and courtrooms. Articles discussing the importance of jury duty to the legal justice system or articles informing the public about the Blake decision and where the public can go to find information relating to their *Blake* cases. There are other topics that staff can publish in the media to provide the public an awareness or information on challenges facing the court or the legal system.

3 MEDIA AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

Other public outreach opportunities for the court to participate in can include the court sponsoring mock trials for various school levels, presentations on the legal system, and conducting courthouse tours or open houses. The courts can also support specific legal events such as warrant fests and legal financial obligations (LFO) reconciliation days. They can sponsor legal education days at elementary and high schools. There are other programs the court can sponsor such as Judges in the Classroom (See section 5).

Another method for public outreach is the development of an effective and informative website. The public has many questions on the complexity of our legal system and an informative website is essential to providing the public a reliable source of information.

The Bench-Bar-Press Committee was formed in 1963 to foster better understanding and working relationships between judges, lawyers, and journalists who cover legal issues and courtroom stories. The mission of the Committee is to seek to accommodate, as much as possible, the tensions between the constitutional values of “free press” and “fair trial” through educational events and relationship building. This Committee’s website has information on working with the press and guidance for judges and courts when working with the press.

4

Virtual Hearings – Do's and Don'ts

Virtual Hearings – Do’s and Don’ts

Courts rapidly began conducting court proceedings with video conferencing technology in March of 2020, during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, and continue to refine their practices.

There are several different types of virtual or remote hearings:

- **Virtual hearings**
All participants appear remotely with video conferencing technology.
- **Hybrid hearings**
Some participants appear by video/telephone and some appear in person. Hybrid proceedings were the most frequently reported type by all court levels in a survey completed by the [Board for Judicial Administration \(BJA\) Remote Proceedings Workgroup](#).

The following information applies to any hearing that has a virtual option regardless of who or how each person is attending the hearing.

Virtual hearings are different from an in-person hearing. You may not be able to see how the judge or other party react to what you say. You may have to submit and view documents differently, have appropriate equipment and support, and request an accommodation for a disability or interpreter for the virtual hearing.

When conducting court proceedings virtually, parties should all be able to see each other, witnesses, the judicial officer, and other necessary participants. Cameras should be positioned on all parties, witnesses, and judicial officers to provide the ability of a party to view the proceeding as they would if they were present in a courtroom.

Websites

If your court offers virtual hearings, you should share information on your court website such as schedule and links, courtroom participation and expectations, how to submit documents and be best prepared, and how to request an interpreter or accommodations for a disability.

- [Seattle Municipal Court website example](#)
- [King County website example](#)

Tech Check Videos

New best practices suggest that court staff should implement a “tech check” on their live link that a user can click on to connect before their hearing. The Remote Proceedings Workgroup survey found that biggest barrier for court users was technology glitches. The NCSC toolkit promotes the “tech check” concept and other research supports this concept.

One example of the video is from the Washington AOC’s Family and Youth Justice Programs. They developed a video and tip sheet for users.

- [Example video](#)
- [Tip Sheet](#)

The Do’s and Don’ts of Virtual Hearings

It is important to provide information to court users on what to expect in a virtual hearing and how to make the hearing most successful.

Some courts have also developed and shared a 30-second video of the presiding judge welcoming people to the court and going over virtual courtroom expectations. For example, [Yakima County Superior Court – Courtroom Two](#).

Resources for the Do’s and Don’ts of Virtual Hearings

- [Zoom Do’s and Don’ts of Virtual Hearings](#)
- [WashingtonLawHelp.org](#)
- [InfoTrack: the Do’s and Don’ts of virtual interactions with judges](#)
- [Tips for Handling a Virtual Court Hearing](#)

The NCSC developed a comprehensive [Remote Proceeding Toolkit](#) in 2024 that includes an overview of remote hearings, policy and technology considerations, tips for remote proceedings, and evaluation strategies.

Courts may want to construct a model remote users’ webpage that all courts could follow that has these court user materials (as well as instructions for attorneys) and more—including a virtual code of conduct. There is a bench card in development with a script about conduct that should follow what courts put on their webpage, so that every user has many options to review in advance.

Additional Resources

- [Survey of Hybrid Proceedings in Washington Courts - 2024 Update](#)
- [Family and Youth Justice Programs Dependency Videos \(wacita.org\)](#)

5

School Outreach

School Outreach

The [Judges in the Classroom](#) program provides Washington teachers with the opportunity to request that a judge visit their classroom.

During classroom visits, judges present age-appropriate lessons featuring state law and practice to K-12 students. The lessons are interactive and provide students with a unique opportunity to learn first-hand about the legal and judicial systems as well as the basic concept of fairness.

[Lesson plans](#) and supporting materials are free for both teachers and judges and are easily accessible to download. The curriculum is intended to engage students in active discussions, courtroom simulations and role-playing. Students also use critical thinking to observe and analyze legal situations.

Launched in 1996, Judges in the Classroom, along with its companion program, Street Law, was awarded the Colleen Willoughby Youth Civic Education Award by Seattle City Club in 2014.

For questions about Judges in the Classroom, contact Nicole Ack at nicole.ack@courts.wa.gov or 360-357-2116.

Both the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals travel to colleges and high schools around the state for oral arguments. The local interaction with the appellate courts provides students and the public an opportunity to see and learn about judicial processes.

Judge/Court Executive Officer/Court Administrator Student Resources

Preparing to Speak in a Classroom

- [Guide to Educating the Public about the Law](#)
- [Judicial Facts and Figures](#)

Class Discussions

- [Civics, Civility, and Collaboration in the Courtroom: What Makes a Good Judge?](#)
Grades: K–12
10–20 mins
Overview: Short discussion about what a judge is, watch 3–12 minute video (depending on age group), discussion about good qualities for a judge to possess.
- [United States Probation and Pretrial Services Charter for Excellence](#)
Grades: 3–12
10–20 mins
Overview: Covers the professional goals and values of Judges. The document uses large words but can be simplified easily for younger students.

Civic Learning Resources

- [Civil Procedure Diagram](#)
- [United States Courts](#)
- [Federal Judicial Center](#)
- [WASHINGTON Courts Jurisdiction/Flow of Cases Lesson](#)
- [US Courts Activity Resources](#)

iCivics Lesson

TEACHER GUIDE

[Judges: Playing Fair](#) (Grades: 7–12)

[Video](#) (4:28)

[Student Handout](#)

Overview: Speak to students about the concept of fairness, show a video about fairness, discuss the judicial branch’s responsibilities, go over student handout page 1, complete student handout page 2, visit website to answer the last question on student handout regarding Washington-specific laws.

Learning Objectives:

- Explain how the judicial branch is different from the executive and legislative branches.
- Describe how federal and state judges are selected and held accountable.
- Determine how their state selects state Supreme Court judges.
- Describe the challenge of remaining fair and impartial as a judge.

HANDOUT/ACTIVITY

- [Constitution Day Word Search](#)
- [English/Spanish Judicial Branch Packet with Games](#)
- [WASHINGTON CivEd Coloring Book](#)
- [Chelan County Courthouse Coloring Sheet](#)
- [Printable Activities Easy-Hard](#)
- [Supreme Court Coloring Pages](#)

VIDEOS

- [Constitution Explained: The Right to a Fair Trial](#) (Grades: 6–12; 2:24 min.)
- [Constitution Explained: Due Process of the Law](#) (Available in English/Spanish; 2:21 min.)
- [Constitution Explained: Presumed Innocent](#) (2:25 min.)
- [Rules and Laws](#) (Grades: K–5; 3:00 min.)
- [Court Shorts: An Impartial Federal Judiciary](#) (Grades: 9–12; 5:00 min.)
- [Jurisdiction: State and Federal Courts](#) (Grades: 6–12; 5:00 min.)

6

Employment Opportunities in the Courts

Employment Opportunities in the Courts

A variety of positions are available in the court system beyond judges and lawyers. Courts depend on court administrators, jury coordinators, clerks, bailiffs, legal assistants, paralegals, interpreters, and court security to provide service to court customers. Qualifications may vary depending on the position.

The Washington Administrative Office of the Courts employs researchers, program and business analysts, human resources staff, educators, software developers, system support analysts, customer service specialists, and administrative staff. Career opportunities are posted [here](#).

Washington courts welcome talented and motivated individuals to join the courts in serving the residents of Washington and helping to ensure equal justice under the law. Residents of Washington depend on the courts to provide a fair and accessible forum for the resolution of disputes. As one of three branches of government, the public's confidence in the judiciary is a critical ingredient in their trust of government as a whole. To preserve this trust, courts must be administered in a way that reinforces the role of the judicial branch in serving the needs of the people.

Commissioner

Many courts employ court commissioners to ease the judges' caseload. Court commissioners are usually attorneys licensed to practice in Washington. Working under the direction of a judge, court commissioners assume many of the same powers and duties of a judge. Matters heard by the court commissioner include probate, uncontested marriage dissolutions, the signing of court orders for uncontested matters, and other judicial duties as required by the judge. In Superior Courts, the state constitution limits each county to no more than three court commissioners, but additional commissioners may be appointed for family law and mental health matters.

District and Municipal Court Commissioners may hear all case and proceeding types.

Non-Judicial employment opportunities in courts

Superior Court Administrator/District and Municipal Court Executive Officer or Court Administrator.

Manages all of the non-judicial functions of the court.

- Leadership, coordination and guidance in areas that include policies and procedures.
- Finance and budget.
- Human resources.
- Information technology.
- Space and facilities.
- Public information.
- Court management and research.
- Statistical analysis and reporting.
- Maintenance of official records.
- Consult with and advise judges, managers, and court staff.
- Advise/teach new laws, court procedures, etc.

6 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COURTS

Court Interpreter

- [Video: Federal Judiciary Careers: Court Interpreter](#)
- Interpret communications for litigants and witnesses, and other parties with limited English skills, helping them understand and communicate with the court and counsel.
- Provided sight translation of relevant court forms.
- Help coordinate the services of other interpreters.
- State offers certification (certified or registered) in 13 languages.
- [Becoming A Court Interpreter](#)

Court Reporter

- [Video: Federal Judiciary Careers: Court Reporter](#)
- Produce verbatim record of proceedings using shorthand, stenotype or stenomask methods.
- Read back testimony in court proceedings; edit and proofread draft transcripts
- Research names and other facts as necessary.
- Assist judges, counsel and other court personnel in accurately recording minutes and rulings or court proceedings.
- Maintain related records and reports as required by law or policy governing court operations and procedures.
- Can be “official” or freelance. Can also do CART (like subtitles on TV).

Judicial Assistant/Administrative Specialist

- [Video: Federal Judiciary Careers: Legal Secretary and Administrative Specialist](#)
- Provide varied office assistance and support.
- Support judges, managers, and other staff as necessary.
- Answer calls and greet people who come to the door/window.
- Prepare correspondence.
- Answer questions for attorneys or unrepresented court litigants.

Bailiff

- Responsibilities and designation of a court bailiff vary from one court to another, depending upon the needs of the court served.
- The bailiff’s primary duties are to call the court to order, maintain order in the courtroom, and attend to the needs of jurors.
- In some counties, bailiffs with legal training serve as legal assistants to the judge. In others, they serve as armed court security officers.

County Clerk

The definition and responsibilities of County Clerk will vary depending on the court level.

- The county clerk is an elected or appointed official who maintains the official records of the Superior Court and oversees all record-keeping matters pertaining to the operation of the Superior Court.

6 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COURTS

- Among other things, the county clerk may be responsible for notification of jurors, maintenance of all papers and exhibits filed in cases before the court and filing cases for the superior court.
- They handle financial matters related to court operations, such as collecting fees, managing budgets, and disbursing funds.
- The county clerk appoints deputy clerks who are present to make a record of every hearing that takes place in the courtroom.

There are several different Deputy Clerk positions in the Clerk's Office:

- Customer Service Clerks handle the front counter, bonds, search warrants, correspondence, mail and letters.
- Finance Clerks handle payments for filings, Legal Financial Obligations, Court Registry, Judgment and Sentence, and any other financial transaction for Superior Court.
- Process Clerks scan and enter all legal documents into the County Document Management System and the State Case Management System.
- Archival Clerks handle all Court Record storage, and management of Exhibits.
- Courtroom Clerks handle all hearing minutes, court documents and exhibits during hearings in the courtroom.
- Juvenile Clerks do the same duties as above except they do it for the Juvenile Court.

Law Clerk

Law Clerks will use in-depth research and investigative skills to review laws and provide expert consultation. Law Clerks have the following responsibilities:

- Compile legal research to assist with a case.
- Consult with a Judge, offering expert recommendations on a legal case.
- Draft, review and edit the Judge's orders and statements for clarity and accuracy.
- Assist in the courtroom with trials and hearings.
- Communicate with parties regarding trials and schedules.
- Update court calendars and schedules.
- Maintain the chamber library.

Case Managers/Probation Officers

Probation Officer careers involve a variety of duties and responsibilities that vary by offender. Their primary job is to uphold the sentencing terms of the probationer with regular Probation Officer job duties including:

- Providing recommendations for each offender based on their situation.
- Developing treatment and rehabilitation plans.
- Meeting with offenders regularly to check for progress and ensure they're following the terms of their probation.
- Notifying the courts of probation violations.
- Using various techniques, including drug and alcohol tests, monitoring software and GPS monitoring to track probationers.
- Documenting all progress and violations.
- Attending hearings and other court proceedings for assigned probationers.
- Coordinating support and services for probationers.

6 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COURTS

Court Clerk

Court Clerk responsibilities include managing day-to-day tasks such as filing legal documents, entering data, and sorting incoming mail as needed.

- Ultimately, you will work with judges and attorneys to ensure they have the administrative support needed to work as efficiently as possible.
- Record the minutes of meetings and court proceedings.
- Create calendars of cases to be called.
- Prepare and distribute court orders, including probation orders, sentencing information and court summonses.
- Collect court fines and maintain records of amounts collected.
- Ensure all legal documents submitted adhere to the law and court procedures.
- Perform basic bookkeeping tasks.
- Administer oaths and affirmations.

Court Security Officer

Court Security Officers patrol the building, including the exterior, interior, and courtrooms, to ensure the safety of the building and its occupants. This may include checking doors, windows, and other access points.

- Screening: Screen people entering the building.
- Responding to alarms: Respond to all alarms, including fire, panic, and open-door alarms.
- Arrests: Make arrests when necessary.
- Security checks: Conduct a security check of the building at the end of the day to ensure that all non-employees have left.
- Security services: Assist uniformed police officers and remove disruptive or violent people from the facility.
- Investigations: Investigate, document, and follow up on any security issues.
- Reporting: Prepare reports and written documents for statistical files and records.
- Coordination: Coordinate with other court employees on related projects.

What degree, training, schooling do you need for your job or jobs within your department?

COURT ADMINISTRATOR

Typically requires a bachelor's degree (BA or BS), along with additional education or experience in court administration.

INTERPRETER

Must meet minimum score on each court interpreter exam and have attended the appropriate trainings. The primary exams and training courses include:

- Written Exam
- Orientation Training
- Oral Exam
- Ethics & Protocol Training

6 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COURTS

Additional requirements include:

- Passing a background check.
- Obtaining a Court Interpreter’s ID Badge.
- Execute the Oath of a Court Interpreter.

COURT REPORTER

Typically requires completion of a specialized training program (available in WA). Optional certifications that can enhance career opportunities include:

- Registered Professional Reporter (RPR)
- Certified Realtime Reporter (CRR)
- Certified Legal Video Specialist (CLVS)

CASE MANAGER

No specific education is required, but a background in case management, social work, or advocacy would be helpful.

COURT SECURITY OFFICER

If you are employed by a County or Municipality, you must pass background investigation, civil service exam, etc., and attend a Corrections Officers Academy (COA).

ON THE JOB AND ONGOING TRAINING AFTER HIRE

- State conferences, webinars, and eLearning opportunities are provided by the Administrative Office of the Courts and various State Associations.
- The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) also provides additional training opportunities.

Additional Resources

- [ARLJ 14](#)
- [Court Management Council Model Court Administrator Job Description](#)

7

Court Governance and Management

Court Governance and Management

Court governance and management play a pivotal role in ensuring the effective functioning of our judicial system.

1. Consistency and predictability

A well-structured governance framework provides the guidance and policies necessary for both day-to-day court operations and long-term decisions. It ensures that court leaders can manage proceedings and administrative matters with consistency and predictability.

2. Upholding principles

Effective governance upholds essential principles, including judicial independence, fiscal responsibility, and procedural justice. Through these principles, courts maintain their integrity and public trust.

3. Collaboration and partnership

Court governance fosters a collaborative partnership between the presiding or administrative judge and the court executive officer or administrator. This synergy ensures efficient management and strategic decision-making.

4. Ethical standards

A robust governance structure adheres to the highest ethical standards of the justice system. Transparency, accountability, and open communication are essential components.

5. Complexity and adaptability

Courts vary significantly in complexity, organizational structures, and funding levels. Court leaders must account for these nuances when developing governance mechanisms. Ethical standards must prevail across all aspects of court operations, ensuring fairness and impartiality.

In summary, court governance and management are the core upon which justice stands. They empower courts to serve society effectively, uphold the rule of law, and safeguard individual rights.

Presiding Judge and Court Executive Officer/Administrator

The presiding judge and the court executive officer / administrator play crucial roles in the efficient functioning of a court system.

All judges and court executive officers / administrators should be familiar with [GR 29](#). This court rule provides for the roles and responsibilities of the presiding judge, as well as the delegation of authority to a court executive officer / administrator. While a presiding judge may delegate these duties, it is the responsibility of the presiding judge to ensure they are performed in accordance with this rule. The relationship of these roles is imperative to a successful judicial system.

To note, presiding judges may delegate authority differently for their local jurisdiction – the roles and responsibilities of the court executive officer / administrator may vary. Generally, the presiding judge may oversee all judicial and legal functions of a court, while the court executive officer / administrator provides an executive level function within the judicial branch to the non-judicial, operational functions of the court. Provided below are some of these roles, but it is important to communicate

7 COURT GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

the specifics of these roles within a local jurisdiction. Because a presiding judge is responsible for the performance of duties, does not mean that the duties themselves are performed by the presiding judge — these may be performed by the court executive officer / administrator, i.e., supervising the daily operation of the court and functions within.

Presiding Judge

The presiding judge is elected by the other judicial officers in the court. Their primary duties include:

- **Leadership**
The presiding judge leads the court, establishes policies, and allocates resources.
- **Access to justice**
They ensure that court processes promote access to justice for all members of the public.
- **Dispute resolution**
The presiding judge facilitates the fair and expeditious resolution of disputes.
- **Resource management**
They maximize the use of judicial and other resources.
- **Efficiency**
The presiding judge enhances efficiency in court operations.
- **Public service**
They focus on improving service to the public.

The presiding judge is also responsible for the recruitment, selection, training, appointment, supervision, assignment, performance, and evaluation of court-appointed temporary judges (See [GR 29](#)).

Court Administrator/Court Executive Officer

The court administrator is a non-judicial executive level professional who manages court operations. Their key responsibilities include:

- **Administration**
The court executive officer / administrator oversees administrative functions such as budgeting, personnel management, programs, and facilities.
- **Efficiency**
They work to enhance court efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Technology**
The court administrator implements and manages technology solutions.
- **Stakeholder relations**
They nurture relationships with justice system stakeholders.
- **Public communication**
They facilitate communication with the public and media.
- **Policy implementation**
The court administrator ensures the implementation of court policies.

7 COURT GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Together, the presiding judge and court executive officer / administrator form a collaborative team that contributes to the smooth operation of the court system (See [GR 29](#)).

County Clerk

The County Clerk in Washington plays a vital role in the efficient functioning of the legal system.

The County Clerk is an Executive Branch organization, operating at the Superior Court level of our justice system. The County Clerk does not extend to functions of courts of limited jurisdiction (District/Municipal Courts), Court of Appeals, or Supreme Court.

Record Keeping

- The County Clerk serves as the record keeper for the Superior Court.
- They maintain and manage court records, including case files, judgments, and other legal documents.

Financial Officer

- The County Clerk acts as the administrative and financial officer for the Superior Court.
- They handle financial matters related to court operations, such as collecting fees, managing budgets, and disbursing funds.

Specific Duties

The County Clerk's duties are assigned by statute, local court rules, and state regulations. These duties may include:

- **Maintaining court records**
Keeping track of court proceedings, filings, and case histories.
- **Certifying documents**
Providing official certifications for court records.
- **Managing jury selection**
Coordinating jury pools and summoning jurors.
- **Handling court fees**
Collecting fees for filing documents, copies, and other services.
- **Assisting judges**
Supporting judges in their administrative tasks.
- **Ensuring compliance**
Enforcing monetary court orders and judgments.
- **Providing public access**
Facilitating public access to court records and information.

Independently Elected Official

- The County Clerk is an independently elected official, as provided by the Washington State Constitution, and is a part of the Executive Branch.
- Their position is crucial for maintaining the integrity and functionality of the court system.

In summary, the County Clerk's role combines record-keeping, financial management, and administrative support to ensure the smooth operation of the Superior Courts in Washington.

Court Governance Practices

Transparency and Communication

- **Openness**
Courts should actively communicate with the public, legal professionals, and other stakeholders.
- **Regular updates**
Share information about court processes, decisions, and ongoing reforms.
- **Accessible information**
Make court records, schedules, and policies easily accessible online or through public channels.

Accountability and Integrity

- **Ethical standards**
Uphold high ethical standards for judges, court staff, and administrators.
- **Internal audits**
Conduct regular internal audits to ensure compliance with procedures.

Efficiency and Timeliness

- **Case management**
Streamline case management processes to reduce delays.
- **Timely decisions**
Ensure timely adjudication of cases.
- **Technology adoption**
Leverage technology for efficient case tracking, e-filing, and communication.

Community Engagement

- **Outreach programs**
Engage with local communities through educational programs, workshops, and town hall meetings.
- **Feedback mechanisms**
Solicit feedback from court users and address their concerns.
- **Community courts**
Explore community court models that involve local residents in implementing and evaluating the community court process.

Professional Development

- **Training**
Regularly train judges, clerks, and staff on best practices, legal updates, and customer service.
- **Leadership development**
Invest in leadership training for court administrators.
- **Collaboration**
Foster collaboration among court personnel and external partners.

Modernization and Innovation

- **Technology upgrades**
Invest in modern case management systems, digital archives, and online services.
- **Alternative dispute resolution**
Promote mediation and other alternative methods to reduce caseloads.
- **Pilot projects**
Test innovative approaches to court administration.

Public Perception and Education

- **Media relations**
Work with media outlets to accurately portray court proceedings.
- **Public education**
Educate the public about the role of courts, legal rights, and the justice system.
- **Celebrate successes**
Highlight positive outcomes and successful reforms.

Remember that rebuilding trust is an ongoing process. Consistent efforts, transparency, and responsiveness are key to restoring faith in the court system.

Three Branches of Government

Legislative Branch

- The House of Representatives and the Senate together form the Legislative Branch on the State level.
- The Legislative Branch is the law-making entities in the municipal, county, or state governments.

Executive Branch

- The Governor leads the State Executive Branch, and the President is the chief of the United States Executive Branch.
- Executive Branch at the local level includes the City or County Manager, and in some municipalities, the Mayor.
- Executive Branch includes such functions as law enforcement, prosecution and local government infrastructure. These functions may be led by independently elected officials within the Executive Branch.

Judicial Branch

- The Judicial Branch interprets laws and ensures their constitutionality.
- While funding comes from the Legislative Branch, the Judicial Branch functions independently in upholding justice.
- Washington State has the following types of Judicial Branch courts: Supreme Court; Sovereign Tribal Courts, Appellate Courts, Superior Courts, District Courts, and Municipal Courts.

Remember, understanding the three branches of government is essential for informed citizenship!

Government structure can vary on a local level. It is important that you are familiar with your local government structure, to ensure you are effectively engaging with appropriate partners. Some local governments operate as a Commission Form, where elected legislative authorities perform executive level directives and/or functions — legislative and executive functions are blended in the same body.

Separation of Powers

Separation of powers “is the division of the legislative, executive, and judicial functions of government among separate and independent bodies.” (Duingan & DeCarlo, 2019, p. 58)

DEFINITION

Separation of powers is a political theory, legal doctrine, and political institution that involves distributing state power among independent branches, such as the legislative, executive, and judicial. Each branch balances the power of the others, enduring that no one branch oversteps its authority.

BRANCHES OF POWER

Legislative

This branch has the authority to create, amend, and repeal laws. It is typically composed of elected representatives. (e.g., parliament or congress)

Executive

This branch is responsible for implementing and enforcing laws. It oversees the daily administration of government policies and public affairs.

Judicial

This branch interprets and applies laws in individual cases. It also has the authority to review whether actions taken by the legislative and executive branches are legal or constitutional.

7 COURT GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

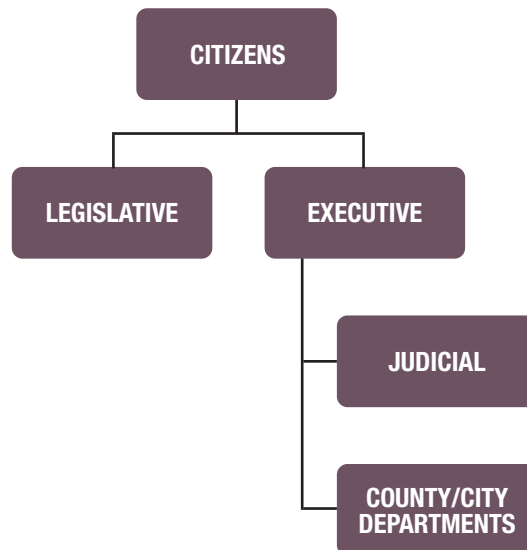
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Video: Washington State Judicial Branch](#)
- [The Who, What, When, Where and How of State Courts - YouTube](#)

It is important that the three branches of government are reflected in your local government organization chart. On the following page are two examples of local branch organization charts. One is incorrect and one is correct.

EXAMPLE OF INCORRECT ORGANIZATION CHART

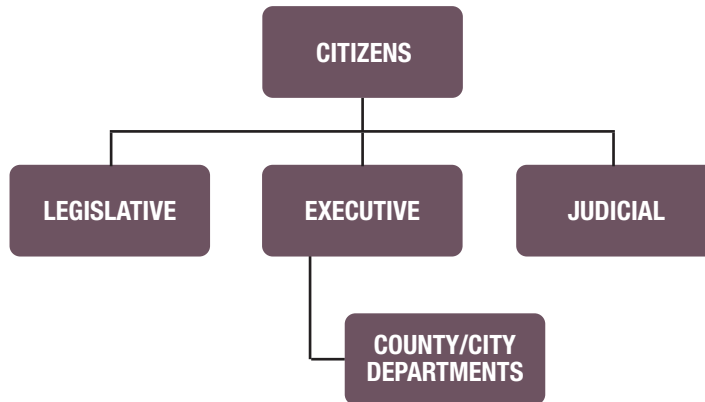
The organization chart depicted below is incorrect. The judicial branch is the third branch of government and is equal to the other branches of government. Any local government organization chart reflecting the court in any other level other than equal to the other branches of government is not in line with the U.S. Constitution.



7 COURT GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

EXAMPLE OF CORRECT ORGANIZATION CHART

The chart below is correct. The three branches of government are at the same level which correctly reflects the order established by the United States Constitution — three separate but equal branches.



8

Court Operations Advocacy

Court Operations and Advocacy

Advocacy for court operations is essential to maintaining the independence of our branch and for the effective operation of the court system.

Advocacy comes in many forms:

- **Testifying at public hearings**

The most visible way to advocate for our courts is to show up at local and state legislative hearings when issues that affect our branch are under consideration. The most common of these issues is the budget. Testifying in person on the budget shows that you are personally invested in the outcome of the discussion. It also demonstrates a commitment to the budget request by showing up — often after business hours — to make your budget request in person.

- **Meeting with the leaders of the coequal branches of government**

The presiding judge of the court should have standing meetings with the heads of both the legislative and executive branches. There are always issues of mutual concern to discuss, and standing meetings provide a level playing field for both parties to bring these issues to a discussion. These meetings also demonstrate that the Court views itself as a coequal branch of government, and not merely an agency or department of the government.

- **Being present at public events, such as “fun-runs” or volunteer opportunities**

The Court has a neutral role to play in adjudicating the laws in our society, but the people within that structure are part of our society. By being present at non-political public events, we humanize the Court without sacrificing that all-important neutrality that is key to our judicial system.

- **Humanizing the court**

The added secondary benefit of building allies outside the traditional governmental structure; allies that can advocate on behalf of the court to the other branches of government. Third-party advocacy is a powerful tool when fighting to maintain a thriving court program.

- **Collaborating with other branches of government, and your local bar association**

Collaboration is a key part of advocacy because it ties the branch with justice system stakeholders at the staff level — where front-line work occurs. That collaboration leads to showing the real-time value of the court’s work and develops allies in other parts of the government. For instance, the therapeutic court staff, working closely with the prosecutor, public defender, police, and incarceration staff, can build powerful allies to testify on the court’s behalf if the therapeutic court program were ever threatened by policy changes or budget cuts.

Tips for advocating for the budget of the court:

- It is best practice that the Court should present its own budget to the appropriating entity. The Court is a separate and equal branch of government that should represent itself when discussing one of the most important government documents: the budget.
- The executive branch often considers courts to be “departments” or “agencies,” when this perspective is inaccurate. The court is equal to the executive; not subservient, and the display of information should reflect that. Conversations about changing how information is presented during budget discussions are best started at the staff level, but may need to be escalated to a discussion between branch leaders.

8 COURT OPERATIONS ADVOCACY

- Use data and data visualizations to tell your story. Like anyone asking for funding, courts need to make a convincing argument in an easy-to-digest format. Court systems typically can produce data reports that can be easily used to create compelling data visualizations.
- ...but don't forget the stories! Real stories about individuals impacted by court programs or functions can have a compelling impact on decision-makers, particularly if those individuals show up to support the court's requests.

**Committee Report:
Submitted By:
Date Submitted**

**Treasurer Report
Juanita Sifuentes
03/11/25**

Report Narrative:

The Budget vs Actual report dated March 11, 2025, is attached for Board approval. The check register balance as of March 11, 2025, is \$104,171.70.

Respectfully submitted,

Treasurer Contact: Name: Juanita Sifuentes
E-Mail: Juanita.sifuentes@co.yakima.wa.us
Phone: (509)312-1569

District and Municipal Court Management Association
Budget vs. Actuals
 July 2024 - June 2025

	Actual	Budget	over Budget	% of Budget
Income				
Conference	220.00	0.00	220.00	
Total Conference	\$ 220.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 220.00	
Membership Dues	37,253.39	57,000.00	-19,746.61	65.36%
Reimbursed Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total Income	\$ 37,473.39	\$ 57,000.00	-\$ 19,526.61	65.74%
Expenses				
Awards	0.00	1,100.00	-1,100.00	0.00%
Bank Service Charges	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Board Meeting Expenses	47.69	1,400.00	-1,352.31	3.41%
Courts Helping Courts	0.00	2,000.00	-2,000.00	0.00%
Education				
Education - Annual Conference	4,249.99	7,000.00	-2,750.01	60.71%
Education - DEI Training	-2,299.00	15,000.00	-17,299.00	-15.33%
Education - Regionals	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Education - Retreat Meals	0.00	500.00	-500.00	0.00%
Total Education	1,950.99	22,500.00	-20,549.01	8.67%
Flowers & Cards	102.43	600.00	-497.57	17.07%
Liability Insurance	1,453.14	1,500.00	-46.86	96.88%
Membership Committee	0.00	100.00	-100.00	0.00%
Miscellaneous Expenses	0.00	500.00	-500.00	0.00%
NACM	0.00	0.00	0.00	
NACM Annual (July)	1,828.71	4,500.00	-2,671.29	40.64%
NACM Mid Year (February)	0.00	2,000.00	-2,000.00	0.00%
Total NACM	\$ 1,828.71	\$ 6,500.00	-\$ 4,671.29	28.13%
President Expense	-338.37	200.00	-538.37	-169.19%
Better Together CLJ Summit	0.00	3,500.00	-3,500.00	0.00%
Total President Expense	-\$ 338.37	\$ 3,700.00	-\$ 4,038.37	-9.15%
Scholarship Committee	990.00	1,000.00	-10.00	99.00%
Technology	3,126.40	5,000.00	-1,873.60	62.53%
CTC (September)	0.00	3,200.00	-3,200.00	0.00%
Total Technology	\$ 3,126.40	\$ 8,200.00	-\$ 5,073.60	38.13%
Travel Expenses	3,103.85	3,100.00	3.85	100.12%
Treasurer Expenses	2,359.92	4,800.00	-2,440.08	49.17%
Total Expenses	\$ 14,624.76	\$ 57,000.00	-\$ 42,375.24	25.66%
Net Income	\$ 22,848.63	\$ 0.00	\$ 22,848.63	

Tuesday, Mar 11, 2025

DISTRICT AND MUNICIPAL COURT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

January 21st, 2025 10:00 a.m.

Meeting held via ZOOM

Board Meeting Minutes

Officers Present:

President	Frankie Peters
Past President	Trish Kinlow
President Elect	not present
Vice President	Mary Beth Phillips
Treasurer	Juanita Sifuentes
Secretary	Candace Enders

Members & Attendees Present:

1. Alisa Hill	33. Maria Gomez
2. Amanda Watts	34. Marianne Boggie
3. Amy Harte	35. Marina Martinez
4. Amy Knutsen	36. Marissa Davis
5. Andy McSeveney	37. Maryam Olson
6. Annalisa Mai	38. Matthew Roth
7. Brian Gleason	39. Melissa Patrick
8. Bryan Farrell	40. MiHa Kapaki
9. Carla Weaver - DOL	41. Molly Martin
10. Carol Landwehr	42. Nikki Meister
11. Courtney White	43. Okhwa Lewis
12. Cynthia Davis	44. Omar Gamez
13. Dexter Mejia - AOC	45. Patrick Wells
14. Diane Dill	46. Patsy Robinson
15. Elizabeth Porras	47. Peggy Hintz
16. Ellen Attebery	48. Penny Larsen - AOC
17. Gail Cannon	49. Rachel Johnson
18. Holly Haddenham	50. Regina Alexander-MPA
19. Jake Wiebusch	51. Robyn Dunham
20. Jane Edmonds	52. Rose Carter
21. Jennifer Smith	53. Sharon Fogo - AOC
22. Jina Cusimano	54. Sonia Ramirez
23. Justin Ward	55. Stacie Scarpaci - MPA
24. Kati Dorman	56. Stacy Colberg
25. Katy Henricksen	57. Suzanne Elsner
26. Kristi Schorn	58. Tami Bennett
27. Kyle Wohlenhaus - DOL	59. Tawnya Parks
28. Lacie Dewitt	60. Uneek Maylor
29. Lauren Pilnick - AOC	61. Valerie Marino
30. LeAnne Benek	62. Yanna Filippidis
31. Lillian Hawkins - AOC	63. Yvonne Jones - AOC
32. Margaret Yetter	

Call to Order: President Frankie Peters calls the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Opening Introductions: Introductions completed.

Adoption of Agenda: Margaret Yetter makes motion to approve the agenda. Amy Knutsen seconds the motion. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes: December 10th, 2024, meeting minutes presented. Margaret moves to approve the minutes. Mary Beth Phillips seconds the motion. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Frankie notes treasurer's report will not be presented today. Some items still need to be reviewed and looked at regarding budget. Treasurer's report will be addressed at next board meeting.

Liaison Reports:

DMCJA: No report.

AOC CSD Liaison: No report.

CLJ-CMS: Dexter Mejia present from AOC. The next courts to go live will be in spring/summer, however they do not have official dates at this time. Margaret Yetter notes AOC will be reaching out to courts for volunteers to help with future go live events.

Dexter notes they have secured a vendor (Gardner) to analyze how person records are managed at a statewide level.

AOC Project Updates: Lillian Hawkins present from AOC. She advises they have hired a new Blake Refund Business System Analyst that replaced Tammy Bayard.

Yvonne Jones gives an update regarding the Pre Trial Services Program.

Lauren Pilnick gives an update regarding the Hope Card Program.

Sharon Fogo gives an update on the Blake Refund Bureau.

MPA: Regina Alexander present from MPA. The MPA conference is scheduled for April 28th - 30th, 2025 in Lake Chelan and registration information will be out soon.

Melissa Patrick advises the conference fee has been raised, it will be \$275 for members and \$325 for early registration nonmembers. 5 scholarships will be available for members.

The next probation academy is scheduled for September 8th – 19th, 2025.

Trish Kinlow addresses the academy and how MPA prepares and staffs it, the CJTC is only providing the space. Trish suggests the academy be moved from the CJTC and should fall under AOC. Melissa notes it would require legislative changes for this to occur. Frankie notes this will be addressed at the next Summit meeting.

DOL: Carla Weaver present from DOL. They have a new staff member, Kyle Wohlenhaus, that has joined the law and justice department.

Carla notes they are receiving questions about processes in JIS. She reminds everyone that DOL cannot help with these types of questions, and they are forwarded to AOC.

DOL offers training on DIAS. If a court wants a training session, they can reach out to law and justice to arrange individual court training.

DOL is updating their drive system and will have an outage effective 5:00 p.m. Thursday February 13th to Tuesday 8:00 a.m. February 18th. All external customers will not be able to access data. A follow up email will be sent out with further details.

Standing Committee Reports

Conference & Education: Amy Knutsen present and confirms the conference will be held at Suncadia in Cle Elum. The conference dates are set for May 18th – 21st, 2025. Due to budget constraints, the incidentals will not be covered this year by DMCMA.

Technology: No report.

Membership: Frankie reports on behalf of Sherri Hansen. 173 applications for membership have been received for 2025.

Legislative: Patrick Wells present and advises they are in week 2 of the long session. An email will start going out weekly regarding bills of interest that are highlighted.

Long Range Planning, By Laws/Policy and Procedures: No report.

Courts Helping Courts: Frankie reports on behalf of Dee Morrill and reminds everyone that the Court Helping Courts request form is available on the DMCMA website.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: No report.

State Committee Reports

BJA & Court Management Council: No report.

BJA Court Education Committee: Margaret Yetter present and advises they have been working on reviewing their charter. They also had discussion about incidental fees and a savings account that AOC has had where extra incidental fees have been compiling for years. The decision was made to send every association back their money.

BJA Public Engagement & Education Committee: Frankie reports that the committee is working on prioritization for the upcoming year.

BJA Court Security: Suzanne Elsner present and advises they last met on December 19th. One of their discussions was regarding continued funding for rural courts.

BJA Legislative Committee: Frankie reports they continue to have frequent meetings. One of the bills that will be introduced is about court centralization. The other bill is regarding interpreters. It would require courts to pay interpreter costs for all classes ordered by the judge.

BJA Alternatives to Incarceration: Brian Gleason present and advises their committee should be wrapping up soon and they are making final recommendations.

Data Dissemination Committee: No report.

Interbranch Advisory Committee: Trish present and advises about the last committee meeting in December.

GR 34 Rules Committee: Kati Dorman present and advises about the rules currently available for comment.

Gender & Justice Commission: No report.

Minority & Justice Commission: Trish advises the last meeting was canceled and the upcoming meeting will be next month.

Trish talks about the IREACH training session and gives a shout out to all the commissions for sponsoring.

Interpreter Commission: Annalisa Mai present and thanks the courts that participated in the translation protocol survey.

AOC is still working on an interpreter scheduling system. Business analysts are currently gathering requirements to ensure all court needs are addressed.

Trish inquires if the commission has talked about usage of certified/registered interpreters from out of state. Annalisa is unaware of any discussion regarding this topic. She will bring it up at the next meeting.

Pattern Forms: Frankie reports that most updates have been to district court forms. No further report.

JIS Codes: Patsy Robinson advises at last meeting only superior court codes were addressed. No further report.

JISC: Frankie reports that there is not a lot of changes as far as JISC. More to come in the future.

CLJ/CMS PSC: No report.

New Business: No report.

Old Business: No report.

Frankie Peters adjourned the meeting at 11:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, Candace Enders, Secretary

DRAFT