

Superior Court of the State of Washington
for the County of King

Linda K. Ridge
Chief Administrative Officer

King County Courthouse
Seattle, Washington 98104

To: Protocol Committee Members

From: Technical Committee Members via Linda Ridge, Superior Court CAO 

RE: Technical Committee Recommendations to the Protocol Committee

Date: October 14, 2025

Linda Ridge, Chief Administrative Officer of King County Superior Court, convened members of the Technical Committee on Oct. 9, 2025. The meeting included Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff, King County Council; Melissa Bailey, Principal Legislative Analyst, King County Council; Elly Slakie, Executive Analyst-Budget, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget; and Catherine Cornwall, Director, Department of Judicial Administration.

The Technical Committee met and reviewed the 2025 Third Quarter Technical Committee Report. The report consists of three indicators. The Committee noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant influence on the judicial system and continues to affect the indicators in the report.

The first indicator is the Weighted Caseload Index of Pending Cases. This index indicates that the court is in need of additional judicial officers in the King County Superior Court. Looking at only this indicator would suggest that the Court could need 4 ½ additional judicial officers; however, as mentioned earlier, the pandemic affected pending cases – and in particular, criminal cases.

The second indicator is the median age for all pending case types and for major case types. While the median age for all case types is comparable to pre-pandemic levels, the median age for criminal cases has increased by almost 80% compared to pre-pandemic levels. In addition, there are more serious criminal cases in the court's pending criminal caseload than there were before the pandemic: 214 vs. 114 homicide cases and 474 vs. 364 sex crime cases at the end of September 2025 and December 2018, respectively.

The third indicator is average daily use of pro tem judges and commissioners. The committee discussed this indicator and concluded that it is not a good indicator of judicial workload. Use of pro tem officers is driven by the need to staff calendars that are heard by commissioners, not judges.

The committee also reviewed data related to Unlawful Detainer filings.

- Unlawful Detainer filings are 93% higher than pre-pandemic levels. Pre-pandemic, there were an average of 385 cases a month. For 2025 YTD (through September), the monthly average is 746 cases a month – almost double pre-pandemic levels.
 - Filings have continued increasing in 2025, and are 15% higher than 2024.
- Superior Court added 2.0 new judges in 2025 to address the increase in unlawful detainer filings. These judges, plus continued reallocation of workload for other judicial officers, has allowed a significant increase in unlawful detainer dispositions and a reduction in pending cases. However, existing resources are not sufficient to address current and rising levels of filings and these measures remain dramatically higher than 2019.
 - Average monthly dispositions were 385 in 2019, 595 in 2024 and 828 in 2025 through September.
 - Average monthly pending cases were 481 in 2019, 2,268 in 2024, and 1,478 in 2025.

Recommendation: Based on the review of the 2025 Third Quarter Technical Committee Report as well as current and trend data for Unlawful Detainers, the Technical Committee recommends that one housing commissioner be added to the King County Superior Court bench.

Additional note to the Protocol Committee: Two commissioners FTEs were added to Superior Court's budget in 2025 (converted from TLT positions). Council authorized protection order commissioners in Ordinance 19466 in response to HB 1320, which was passed in the 2022 state legislative session (). Those commissioner positions were not added through the Protocol Committee. For additional information on the protection order process and the need for those commissioners, see Ordinance 19546, Section 35, Proviso P1 ([LINK](#))