

State of Superior Court

2026

Mission & Values

MISSION

The mission of the King County Superior Court is to equitably serve our diverse public by administering justice in accessible, inclusive, and unbiased forums.

VISION

Be open to
Be trusted by
Provide justice for **ALL**



CORE VALUES

FAIRNESS AND TIMELINES

Act fairly, timely, and without bias, and ensure decisions are clear and equitable.

LEADERSHIP

Model leadership, excellence, civility, and high ethical standards at all levels, and in all areas, of the Court.

RESPECT

Be respectful and inclusive of all backgrounds and cultures.

ACCESSIBILITY

Ensure court proceedings and information are understandable to all, courthouses are barrier-free, and court services are accessible to all.

SAFETY

Provide a safe and secure courthouse for everyone, ensuring the right to witness and participate in the delivery of justice.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Assist court users in navigating the court system efficiently and effectively.

INNOVATION

Implement best practices and innovative programs / solutions to advance the Court and meet future needs.

COLLABORATION

Work with regional partners and stakeholders to achieve results that benefit all members of the community.



Priority of the Judicial Branch:

- ▶ Access to Justice
- ▶ Perform Rule of Law Functions

Overview

- 56 Judges + 13 Commissioners
- 385 Employees
- \$168.5 Million Biennial Budget
- 4 Courthouses:
 - Seattle = 29 Judges + 8 Commissioners
 - CCJFC = 9 Judges
 - MRJC = 17 Judges + 4 Commissioners
 - Harborview = 1 Judge + 1 Commissioner
- 58,711 cases filed in 2025 requiring judicial action





Pictured: 40 King County Superior Court Judges 2024. (16 not pictured)

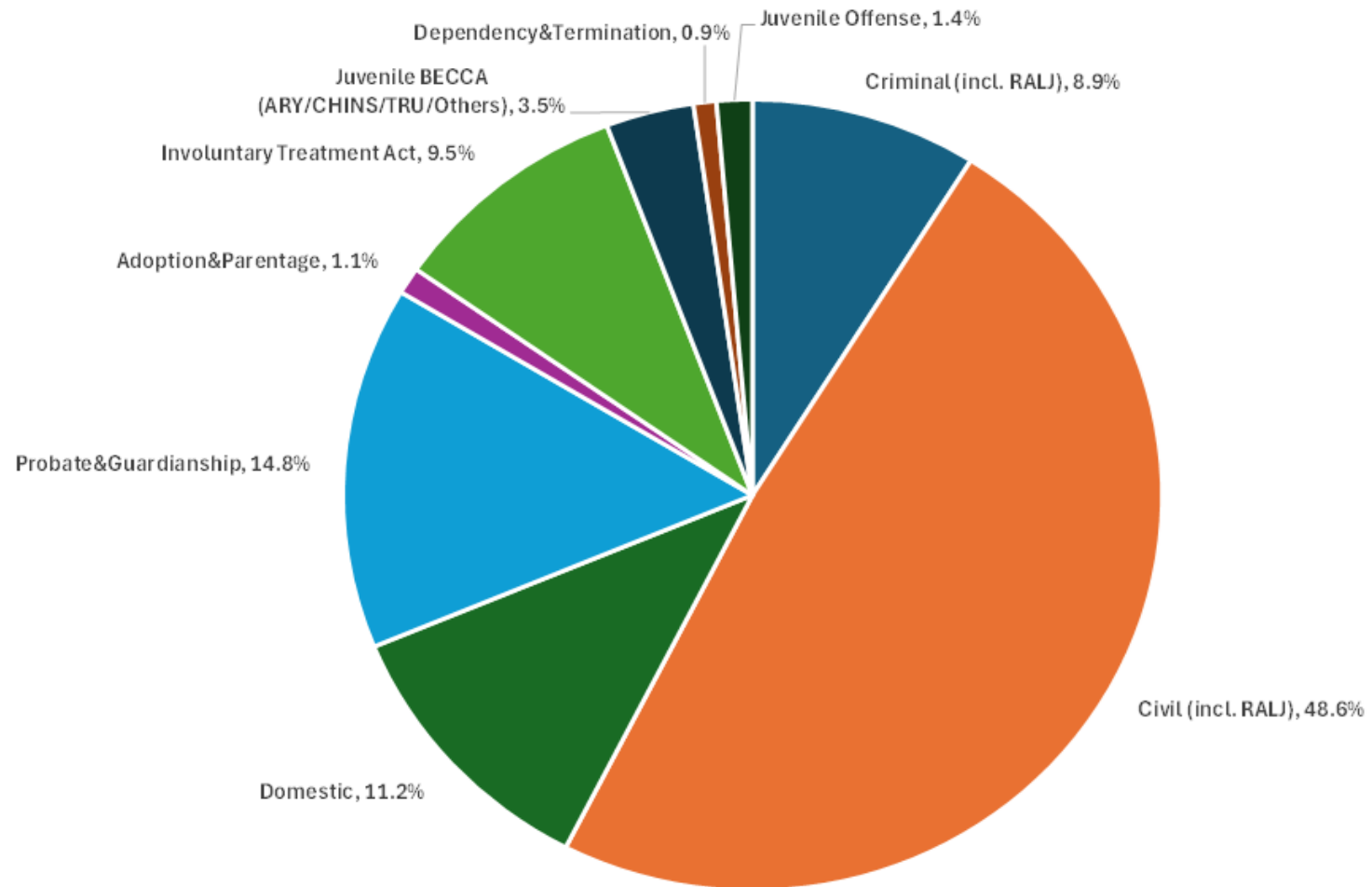
Filings by Departments

(excludes matters filed with the Clerk)

- Civil = 49%
- Probate/Guardianship = 15%
- Domestic = 11%
- ITA = 10%
- Criminal = 9%
- Becca = 4%
- Juvenile Offender = 1%
- Dependency = 1%



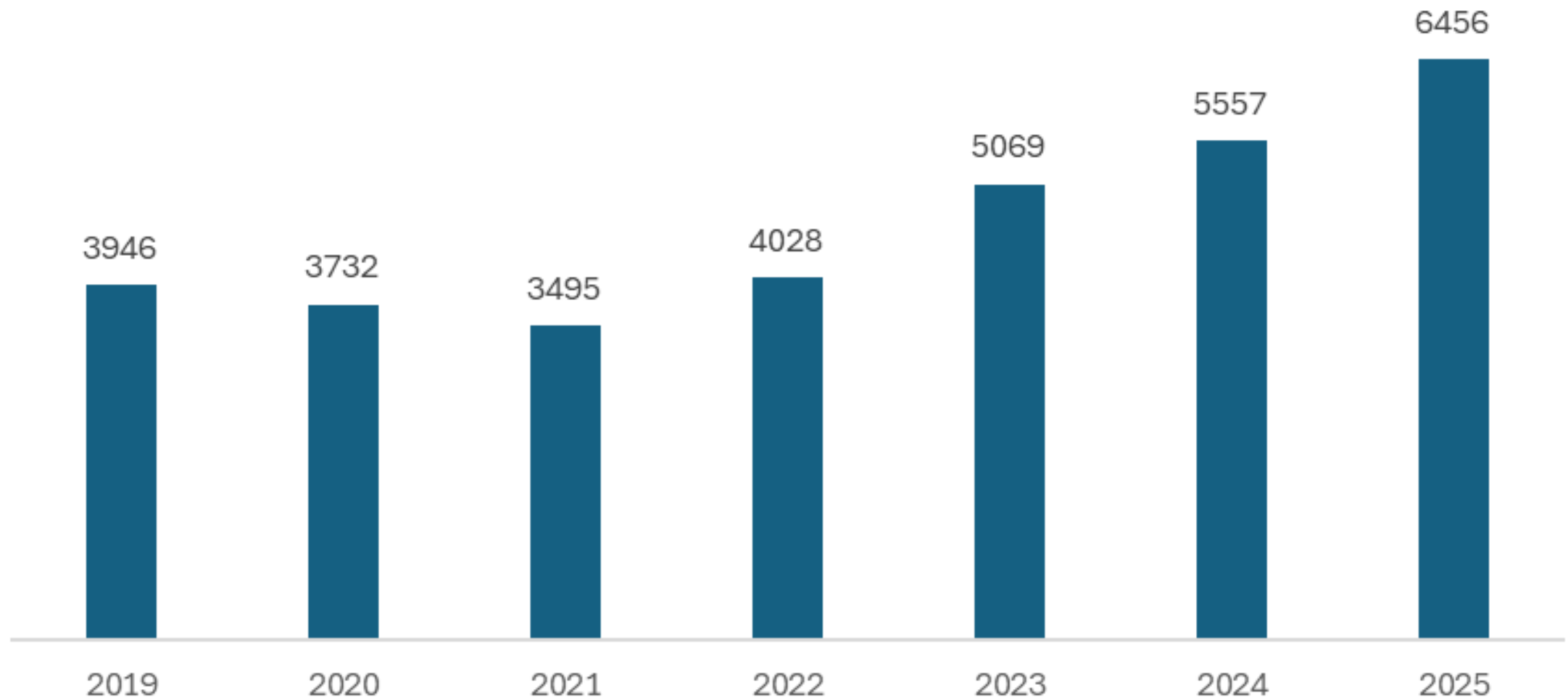
KCSC 2025 Judicial Filings by Category (excluding Matters Filed with Clerk)



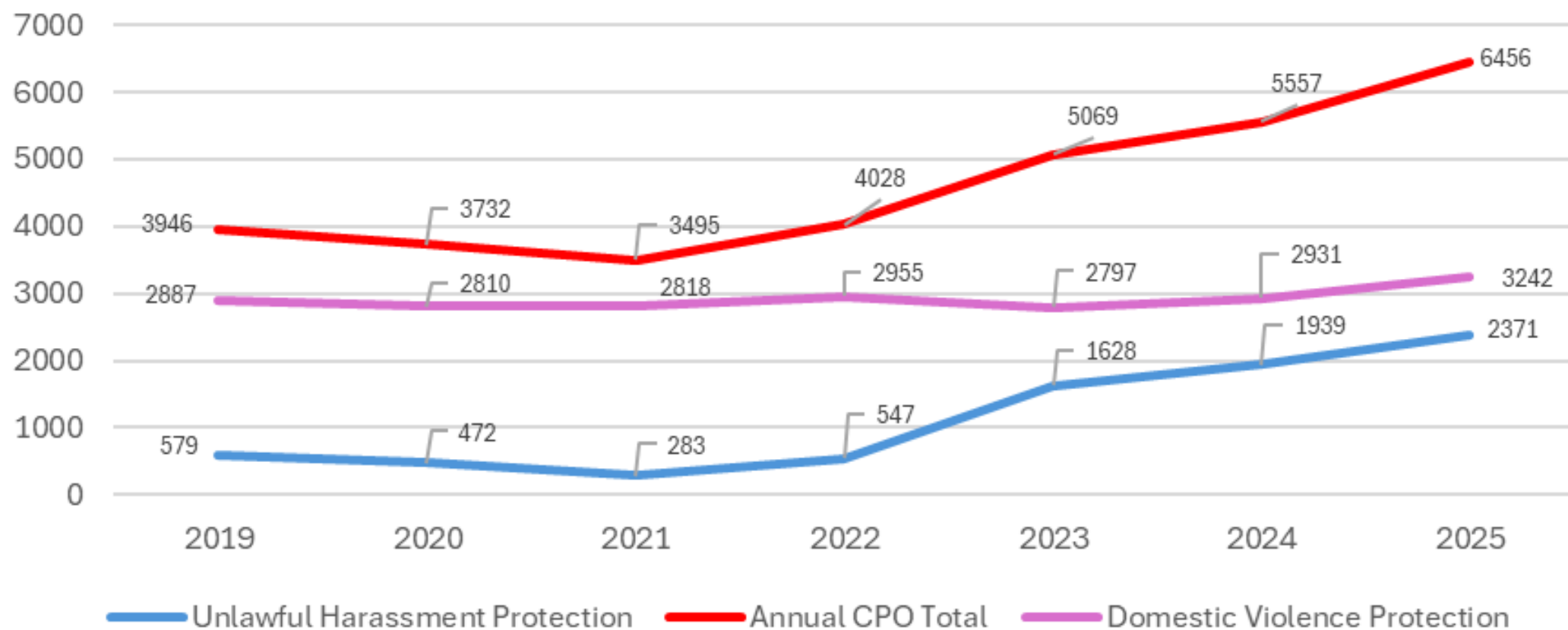
Civil Trends

- Civil Protection Orders have increased since pre-Covid and continue to rise from 2022 due to dramatic increase in anti-harassment petitions
- Law changes July 2021 RCW 7.105: exceptions for filing fee, additional grounds, lengthened hearing time, no wrong door
- 309% increase in Anti-Harassment Petitions since 2019
- New normal: High Filings of Unlawful Detainers
- Increase in Guardianship/Probate
- General Civil Trials are lowest statutory/Constitutional priority=wait for trial judges for lengthy trials

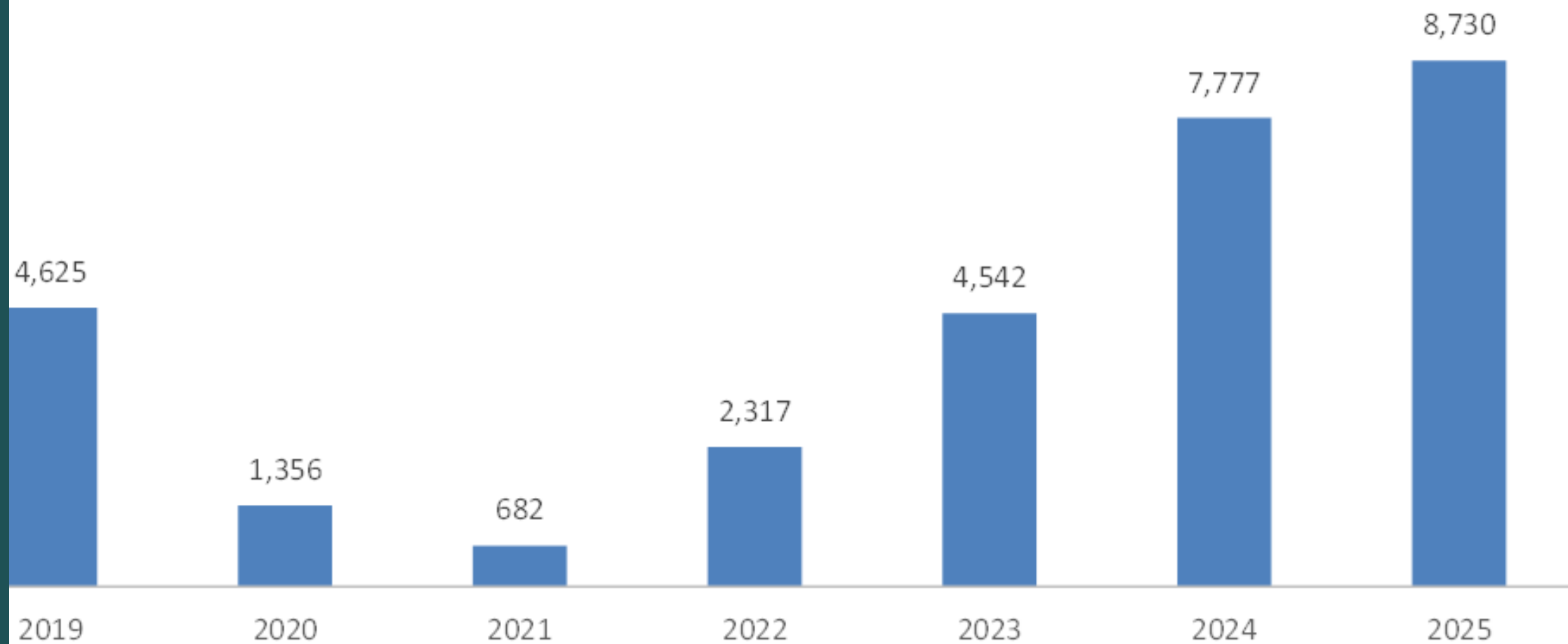
KCSC All CPO Filings (all civil protection orders)



KCSC 2019-2025 DVP, Antiharassment, and Total CPO Filings

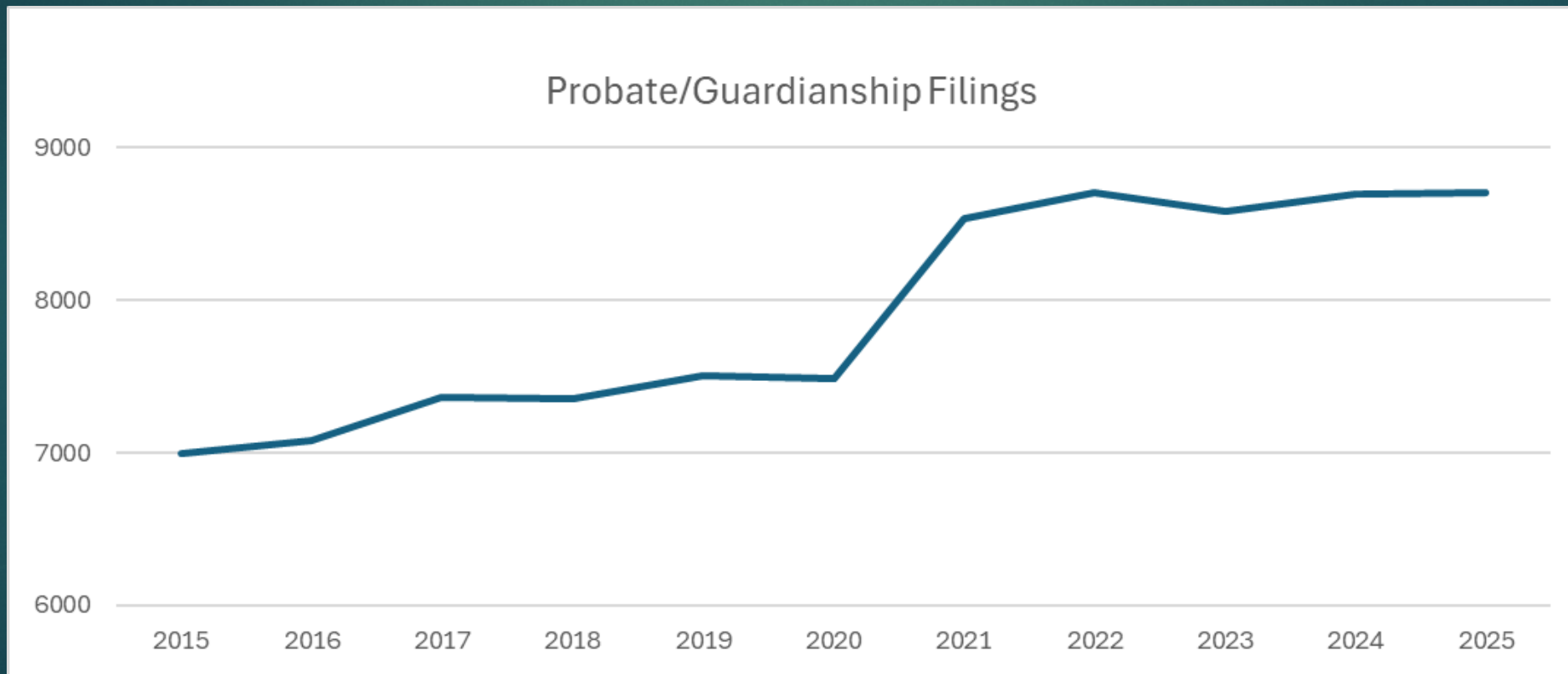


KCSC: Annual Unlawful Detainer Cases Filed (2019-2025)



Civil Trends Cont'd

- Probate/Guardianship increase during pandemic

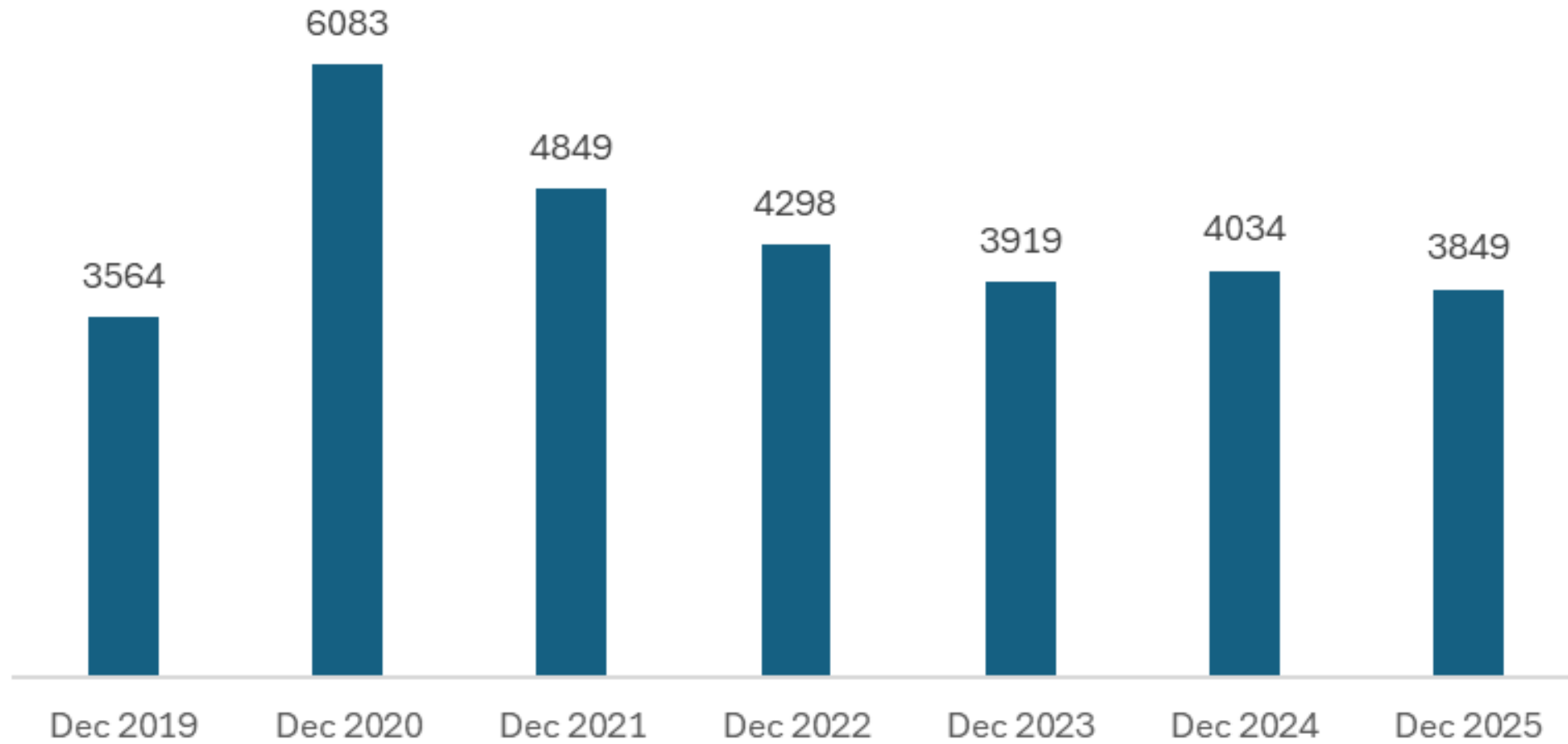




Criminal Filings and Completion Trends

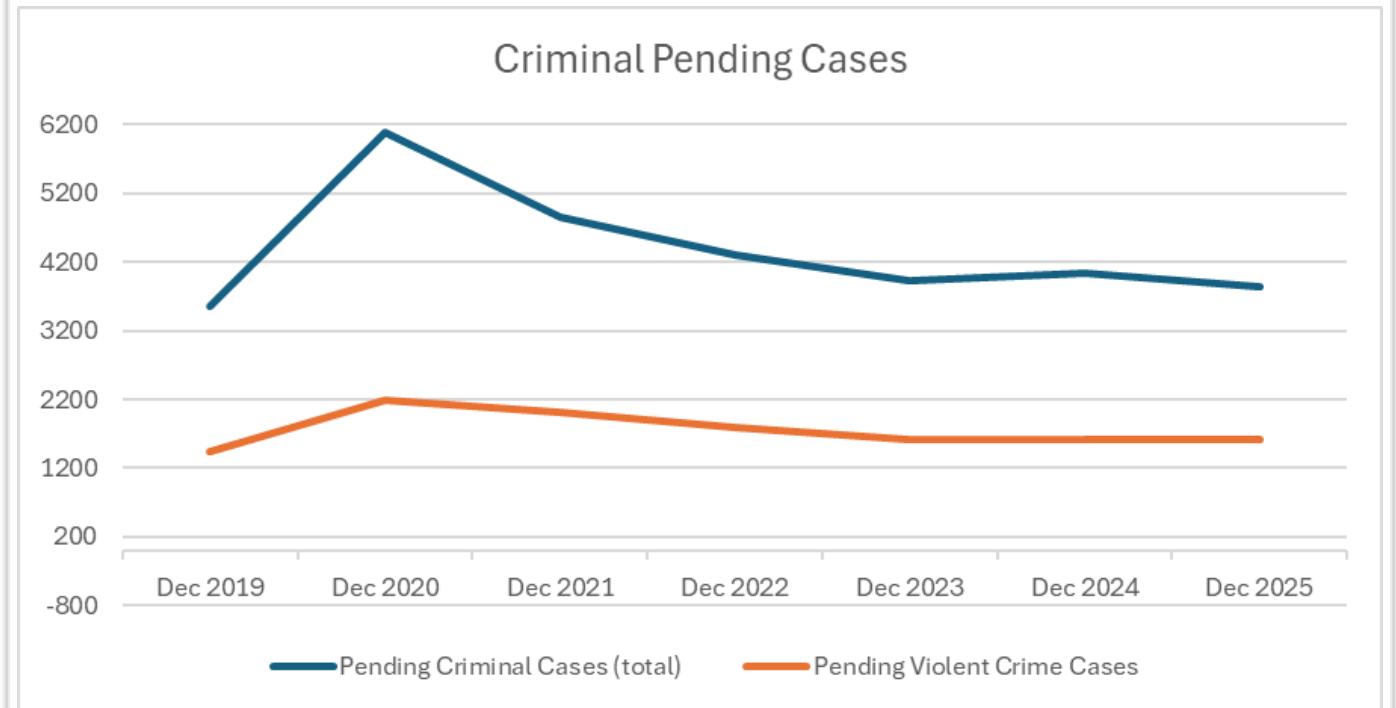
- Cleared pandemic backlog generally
- Complex and serious felonies (murder, sex offenses) have the longest time to resolution
- Juvenile resolutions up and filings slightly down in 2025

Year-end Pending Criminal Cases (total)



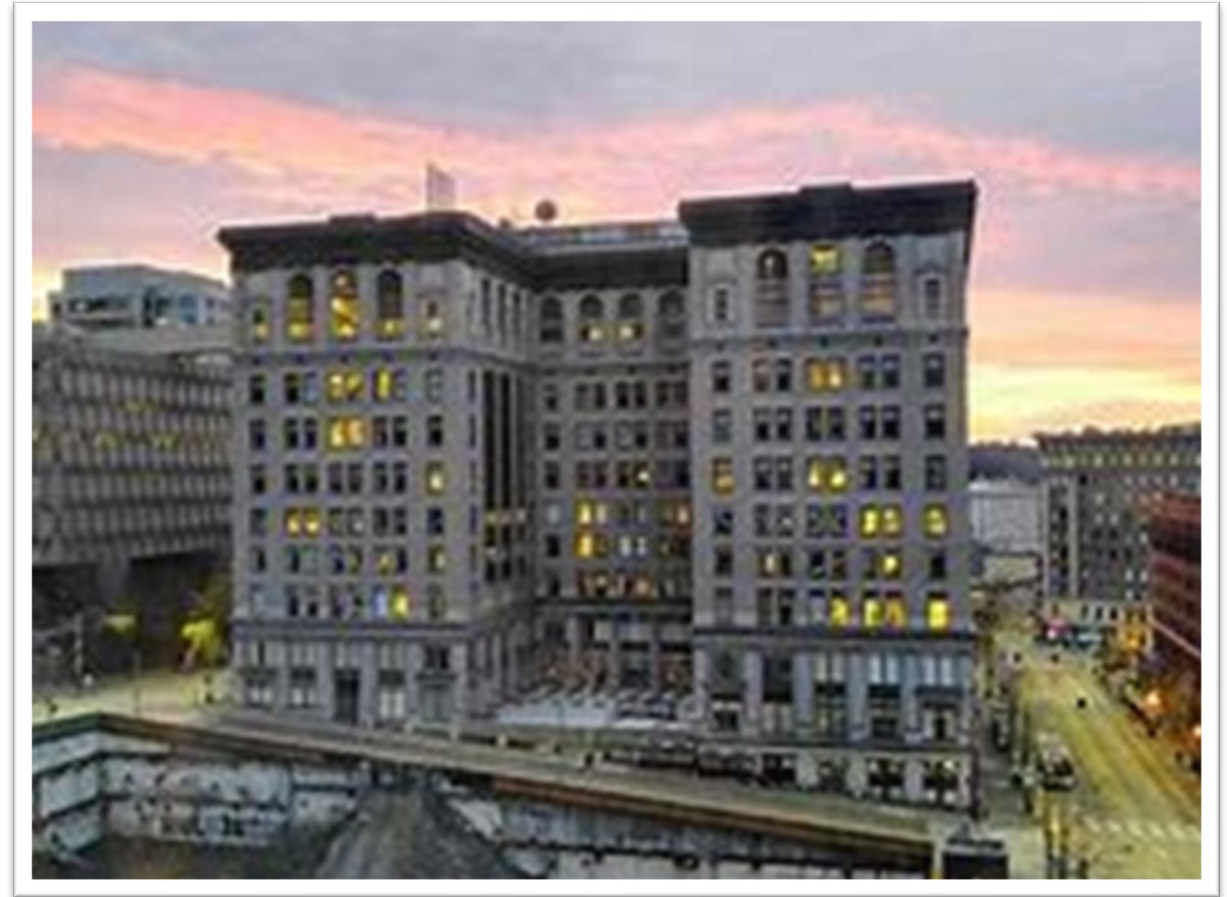
Criminal Trends

Criminal backlog has reduced thanks to Council support



Capitalized on Covid Funds for Modernization

- ▶ Increased access to our court through remote proceedings
- ▶ Remote jury selection/\$ savings and coverage
- ▶ Ability to utilize judges throughout courthouses



Superior Court Operational IT Support

Technical Environment

75 Video Enabled Courtrooms.

12 Video Enabled ITA Hospitals.

350 Teams Handsets.

700 Laptops.

162 Printers/Copiers.

Courtroom Operations

Over 3800 networked pieces of technology requiring 100% up time Monday-Friday 8:30-4:30.

Enable remote jury selection and participation by parties and witnesses.

Secure display of documents, images, and videos in courtroom from any device via an HDMI connection.


KCIT

KCIT remediation projects/4500 required actions (patching/updating software and firmware vulnerabilities).

KCIT does not have access to Superior Court equipment =Superior Court IT staff.

Sustainability

Improve ratio of IT Staff to maintenance needs.



Metric	Recommended Benchmark	Current Efficiency
Endpoints per IT technician	200–350	475
IT Staff per Employee	1:27 (average)	1:50

Restoration/Right-sizing thanks to Council Action

Juvenile Probation

Restoration of 8 Juvenile Probation Counselors over the last two budget cycles

Unlawful Detainer

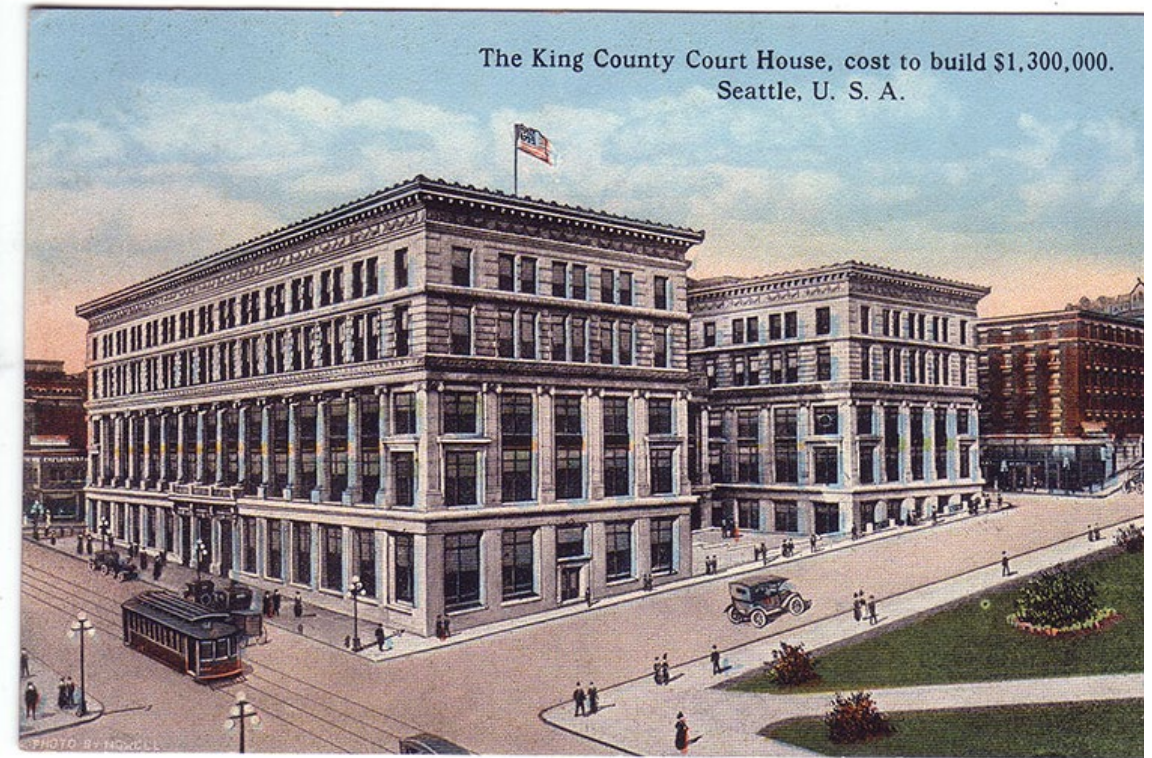
2 new judges
1 new housing commissioner

CPO Resources

2 commissioners added; now funded by County

2024-2028 Strategic Focus Areas

- Enhance the Court User Experience
- Enrich the Employee Experience
- Improve Court Facilities, Safety, and Security
- Be an Adaptive, Innovative, and Responsive Court



Continuous Improvement Efforts

Strategic Plan implementation: Strides in 2025

- Integrated Procedural Fairness Practices to Enhance Public Trust and Confidence
- Provided DEI Training for Staff; Evaluated HR Practices
- Began ADA Assessment/Improvements
- Updated Continuity of Operations Plans re Cybersecurity
- Prepared Policy Guidance/Training for Use of AI in the Court in Anticipation of County Rollout

Future Challenges

Need Long-Term Planning of Courthouse/DAJD Facilities

Critical Priority: Adequate infrastructure for King County's justice system

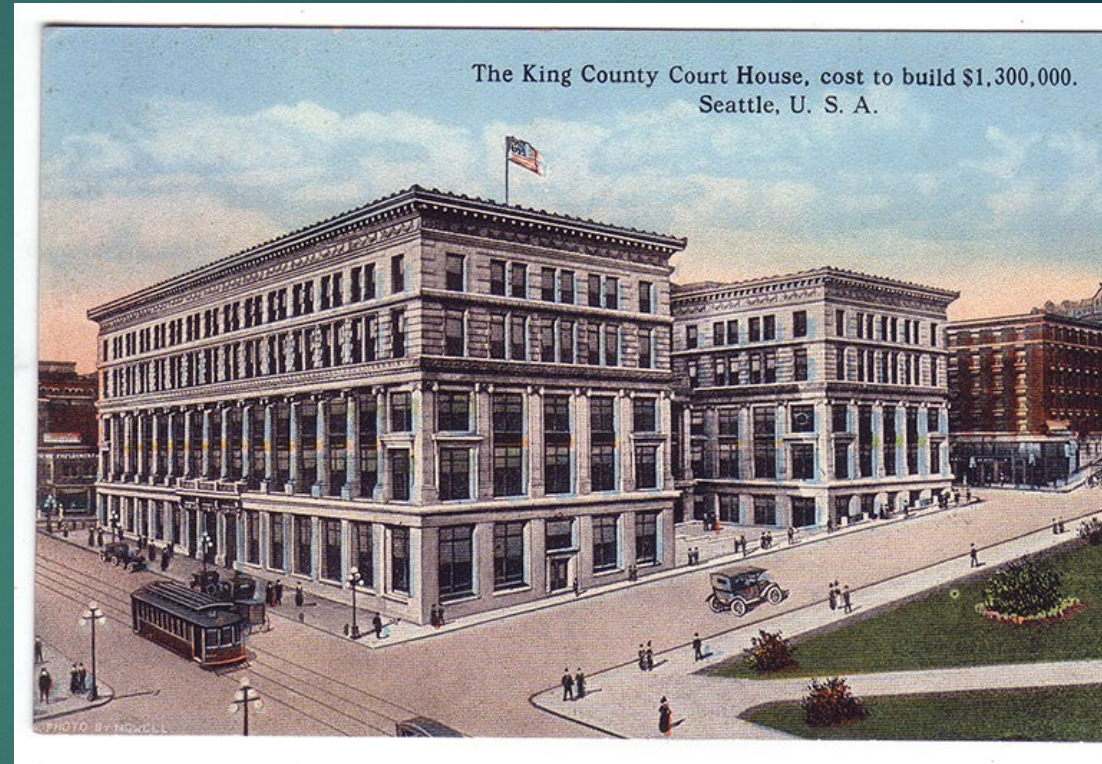
Deferred maintenance in King County Courthouse and Maleng Regional Justice Center

Antiquated physical layouts: safety and efficiency challenges

Losing opportunities as land is sold and development takes place in the County

Prioritize courthouse spaces for access and as centers of civic engagement

Health of the courthouse buildings is a sign of the value society places on work of the courthouse



Challenges

Safety, Security and Maintenance of Physical Locations: Access to justice

Meet continued demand for timely service:
Unlawful detainers,
protection orders,
probate/guardianships,
and civil trials

AI: How do we incorporate AI into our practices?

IT infrastructure: support expanded remote proceedings/services and cybersecurity that provide increased access



We join the Council in our shared mission to collaborate and serve the people of King County.