



Superior Court
00100.861.

Mission Statement

Superior Court:

- Adjudicate all cases, both criminal and civil, in a just and timely manner
- Assure due process and equal protection under the law
- Promote access to justice to all persons

Drug Court:

Enhance community safety and security by holding substance abusing individuals accountable for their actions while providing them an opportunity for treatment to develop and change their life skills and habits so they can become responsible and productive members of their families and society.

LIFT Court (Living in Families Together) Family Therapeutic Court:

LIFT Court's mission is to achieve safe and timely permanent child placement by providing structure, discipline, accountability and encouragement to parents through judicially managed community based service.

Function

Superior Court: The Superior Court is a general jurisdiction court. It has the responsibility of adjudicating matters coming before it over which it has original or appellate jurisdiction, pursuant to the Constitution of the State of Washington. This includes felony criminal, civil, juvenile, domestic relations, adoption, guardianship, paternity, probate, domestic violence, and mental illness cases. The court is charged with resolving cases in an accessible and expeditious fashion.

Drug Court: Clallam County Superior Court operates two Drug Court Programs for those charged with crimes: Adult Drug Court and Juvenile Drug Court. The Drug Courts are a minimum one year voluntary treatment-based program for individuals in need of intensive treatment for addictive disease and co-occurring mental health disorders. Drug Court offers an alternative to criminal prosecution.

Since its inception, Drug Court has served 1383 participants with 439 graduates. (This year due to the new legislative rulings regarding Blake, Drug Court has recognized 11 participants for their efforts and dismissed their charges, these are not considered or counted as graduates.) Drug Court reduced recidivism, returned participants to work and school, reunited families and participants became active members of the community reducing need for community services. Clallam County has been able to provide more services and treatment opportunities to more participants than any county of comparable size.

L.I.F.T. Court (Living in Families Together) operates for high risk dependency cases that involve mental illness and/or addiction and alcoholism. Participants are referred by the court, social workers, attorneys, treatment providers or themselves. Participants are reviewed on a weekly basis for parenting, housing, legal, recovery/mental health issues and counseling compliance. Since its inception in August 2008, L.I.F.T. Court has served 266 parents and 324 children. 98 parents have graduated, and 142 children have achieved permanency without the need for a trial. L.I.F.T. Court reduced recidivism, returned parent and children to school and/or work, reunited families, reduced the need for additional supervision, and created participants who are interested in their communities and want to be part of the greater good.

The L.I.F.T. Court Coordinator has been a member of the Clallam County Behavioral Health Advisory Board since 2008. The Committee meets on a bi-monthly basis and makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on how to best allocate the 1/10 of a 1 percent Substance Abuse Disorder/Behavioral Health Dollars our County collects. The Committee reviews all Requests For Proposals (RFP's) submitted each year and determines who qualifies to receive grant funds. The L.I.F.T. Court Coordinator continues to be on the Committee this year that reviews the RFP's and presents to the Committee for a vote on which programs are to be funded.

Trends/Events

Blake Decision: In February of 2021, the Supreme Court declared former RCW 69.50.4013 unconstitutional, invalidating the crime of felony possession of a controlled substance. As a result, thousands of convicted individuals were able to have their convictions vacated and possibly resentenced. The court continues to work closely with the public defender's and prosecutor's offices to handle these matters as efficiently as possible. Our case numbers indicate that in 2021 a total of (102) cases were brought before the court, in 2022 a total of (82) cases, and in 2023 through June a total of (173) cases have been reviewed and addressed on our regularly scheduled court calendars before our presiding judicial staff without the need to use Pro Tem Court Commissioners. Since 2021 a total of (357) Blake cases have been addressed by the court date without any additional costs incurred by the court.

Unified Guardianship Act (UGA): As of January 1, 2021, the State of Washington enacted a new statute (RCW 11.130.195) that requires all courts to begin appointing guardian ad litem attorneys and court visitors to represent parties involved in minor guardianship cases. The average hours per case can range from 5-20 hours total, and \$45/\$100 per hour for attorney/court visitor fees. In 2021 there were a total of (27) cases filed, in 2022 a total of (43), and in 2023 (7) cases filed through June 30, 2023, for a total number of (77) appointments since 2021 after the entry of this statute. In addition, the Administrative Office of the Courts offered funding to courts to help cover these additional costs.

Attorney Appointments: Over the last year the court/county is struggling with finding attorneys to appoint in cases, this includes attorneys for criminal, family, dependency, UGA attorney and/or Court Visitors, and Guardian ad Litem. There is a need for attorneys on the Peninsula and beyond, where we often reach out to other counties seeking attorneys to take cases. This lack of attorneys often leads to the attorneys, GALs and Court Visitors that we do appoint in cases to be saturated to the point where they need to not accept appointments because they have a large caseload pending.

Interpreter Costs: The court has seen a large increase in the need for interpreters and interpreter costs over the last year. One change that we have experienced this year is the need to schedule two court certified interpreters for trials and hearings lasting longer than one hour as required by AOC. This puts a burden on the court to find and confirm two interpreters and increases the costs associated with this mandatory court service. However, AOC has provided grant funding to reimburse the courts for this cost, but the reimbursement is 50% of the costs incurred.

Extraordinary Costs: This year the court has been inundated with expert service fees and costs associated with indigent criminal cases related to high profile cases. Payment of expert services is required by the court. We have almost reached the maximum funds available to pay for these costs and have submitted a request to the BOCC for more funding for 2024.

Court Calendar Replacement: Superior Court currently uses and depends upon a web-based court calendar program built in-house many years ago for scheduling court hearings, trials, jury pools, speedy trial timelines, and many other pertinent court case information. This program is nearing end of life and will no longer be supported by IT in the near future. We have been working diligently to find a replacement option with the help and support of IT but have not been successful at this point. This is a critical calendar system used by both court staff and the public.

Evictions & Unlawful Detainer Cases: The court has seen a noticeable increase in unlawful detainer and eviction cases going to trial due to the end of the eviction moratorium in 2021 and Clallam County's implementation of a new process authorized by the Washington Legislature. Since announcing the Eviction Resolution Program and Right to Counsel for Indigent Defendants in Unlawful Detainer Proceedings, both Northwest Justice and Peninsula Dispute Resolution Center are now able to assist landlords and tenants with questions about evictions.

Zoom and Video Conferencing: The court continues to provide remote appearance options for courtroom and in custody proceedings that started due to the COVID Pandemic which began in March 2020. However, due to a recent case *Bragg v. State of Washington* involving confidential conversation between an in custody client and attorney during remote court proceedings, it was determined that the need for in person hearings was necessary. As of November 2023, the court is now requiring in custody cases to be heard in the courtroom which causes delays with courtroom proceedings due to transferring defendants from the jail to the court and back.

Local Court Rules - Revised: This year Superior Court took on the onerous job of reviewing and updating our Local Court Rules. We added new rules and amended or removed rules that are no longer needed. As part of this process we notified the Clallam Bar and all stakeholders of our request to update and requested comments or suggestions to be forwarded to the court for consideration. These updated LCR's were finalized and submitted to the Administrative Office of the Courts on July 1, 2024, for final entry on September 1, 2024.

Protection Orders: In 2022 the Washington Legislature enacted a global approach to protection orders. This approach required coordination with District Court and the Clerk in the implementation of e-filing. Superior Court continues to work with District Court and the Court Clerk's office in providing these new procedures and instructions for the public to utilize to comply with the mandatory legal requirements required by the Legislature. At the time it was determined that these court calendar cases were to have special closed Zoom sessions for safety and confidentiality, but it was later determined that the closed Zoom sessions are no longer needed.

Drug Court Standards: Over the past five years Drug Court has worked to revise several aspects of the program to meet or exceed National Drug Court standards. We are taking time to allow changes to the program and their impact to be measured. We will be seeking increased mental health service collaboration with local providers and have invited one of the largest providers to join the Drug Court team for case consultations. There is also an ongoing effort to increase virtual access to participants while incarcerated so a continuum of care can be maintained.

L.I.F.T. Court - Reunification Day Picnic: L.I.F.T. Court will be hosting our fourth annual Family Reunification Day celebration picnic on August 11, 2024. Each year a Reunification Day celebration committee meets over the course of three months to plan and prepare for all of the arrangements and details of this event. The Parents for Parents Coordinator, Michelle Warren, is leading the Committee this year along with the support of the L.I.F.T. Court Coordinator, FJCIP Coordinator, and the Committee members. This event will be held at Lincoln Park and we will have food, games, prizes and family photos taken by a volunteer photographer, along with several guest speakers.

L.I.F.T. Court Coordinator - Temporary Workload: The L.I.F.T. Court Coordinator coordinated both Drug Court and L.I.F.T. Court from July 2023 thru January 2024, taking on an additional 43 Drug Court participants. During this time, the L.I.F.T. Court Coordinator attended two Drug Court staffings per week along with coordinating the Drug Court program itself on a weekly basis, along with attending the monthly CJTA (Criminal Justice Treatment Account) Committee meetings as well as running the L.I.F.T. Court program.

Goals

Superior Court:

1. We continue to ensure safe and secure courtrooms for the protection of litigants, witnesses, spectators, and courthouse personnel. We actively monitor, update and provide emergency radios for all courthouse offices in order to communicate with Courthouse Security providing for quick responses when requested. The court continues to believe that the best approach to courtroom security is a countywide approach to courthouse security. Implementation of the minimum standards set forth in GR 36 remain a minimum standard that the court believes should be implemented, including a single point of entry monitored by armed security officers and walk-thru screening. In 2022 we were successful in applying for funding to provide for courthouse security cameras and door scanners, and a request for a security assessment which was performed 6.28/23. In 2023 we were successful in applying for and received and award for a walk-thru scanner and support of two armed security officers. Additionally, as of 5/31/24, the court applied for an additional grant offered through AOC for funding to support an X-ray machine and support for one armed security officer. We are still working toward installation of an emergency broadcast notification system throughout the courthouse and County.
2. In June 2022, a Supreme Court decision was made regarding GR 42, Indigent Defense, stating that "Superior Courts and courts of limited jurisdiction shall neither manage nor oversee public defense services, including public defense contracts and assigned counsel lists." This decision has impacted the courts not only by eliminating attorney contract agreements with the courts and assignment of attorney appointments related to criminal cases, but also removed the funding of these services from the court budget to manage and provided to the Board of County Commissioners to manage. This transition and decision has caused some confusion and difficulty for the court when making decisions to appoint an attorney to represent defendants, and is still difficult for the court when needing an attorney when there are conflicts.
3. Superior Court is devoted to working on courtroom modernization projects by making audio/visual and other technological improvements to bring the courtrooms to current standards. As needed, we have updated all of our courtroom recording and video technology from Justice AV Solutions (JAVS) to provide more options for viewing exhibits and videos for viewing by jurors, witnesses and the public. We also now have the ability to provide video conferencing when witnesses are unable to appear in court, and improved technology and hardware for four courtroom video carts with an Elmo and laptop for participants to use during court proceedings.
4. In March of 2018 Clallam County was chosen to participate in and has continued to be successful in a program called "Parents for Parents." This program provides education, mentoring and increased engagement in the Dependency system with the help of a Parent for Parent Coordinator and Parent Allies to promote safe and timely reunification of children with their parents. This program now offers participants two Dependency classes for strengthening and developing family relationships. This program has proven to be successful in that this year the funding agency Akin has now increased the funding and expansion of this position and program for Clallam County for the Parent for Parent Coordinator to provide services for Clallam County, Jefferson County, Island County and San Juan County.

- The Court provides 24-hour coverage for law enforcement search warrants and wire orders. In addition, we work to further the accessibility of substance use disorder services for individuals incarcerated in the Clallam County jail. Our Drug Court participants can now use a texting check-in program called "One Step" to help communicate with participants by providing free texting and tracking of appointments and schedules.

Drug Court:

- Provide an alternative to traditional criminal procedures for defendants committing offenses due to drug addiction.
- Provide team training to enhance the effectiveness of both Adult and Juvenile Drug Court Teams and individual team members.
- Utilize existing financial resources effectively.
- Explore alternatives to State funded inpatient treatment placements for participants needing more help than is available through intensive outpatient treatment.
- Continue to work with our established Criminal Justice Treatment Account (CJTA) steering committee that serves as a countywide forum charged with submitting an annual plan with the Salish Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization (SBHASO) for disposition of funds provided from the CJTA.
- Work to further the accessibility of substance use disorder services for individuals incarcerated in the Clallam County jail through telehealth services.
- Develop a more robust prosocial activities program for Drug Court participants and strengthen the alumni participation and retention.

L.I.F.T. Court:

L.I.F.T. Court is in its second year with Family Court Commissioner Elizabeth Stanley on the bench and its 16th year running this program. We continue to have L.I.F.T. Court weekly. The first and third weeks of the month with the Court Commissioner presiding from the bench, and the second and fourth weeks of the month the L.I.F.T. Court Coordinator runs a check-in group. The L.I.F.T. Court Coordinator attends Dependency Court weekly and maintains contact with attorneys, treatment providers, DCYF, and the Child Advocate Program. L.I.F.T. Court is responsible for all record keeping, data input, outreach, intakes, discharges, staffing and operation of L.I.F.T. Court. The Coordinator is involved in Dependency Court in order to get referrals for L.I.F.T. Court.

Workload Indicators

	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	6/30/24 Actual
Cases Filed:			
Criminal	401	316	149
Civil	758	883	504
Domestic	273	299	127
Probate/Guardianship	565	553	313
Adoption/Paternity	86	87	30
Mental Illness	137	119	83
Juvenile Non-Offender	250	199	118
Juvenile Offender	102	137	96

Total Cases Filed	2,572	2,593	1,420
Non-Trial Proceedings:			
Civil/Juvenile	3,282	2,806	1,549
Criminal/Juvenile Offender	5,303	4,532	2,466
Total Non-Trial Proceedings	8,585	7,338	4,015
Trials:			
Civil Non-Jury Trial	37	49	34
Civil Jury Trials	3	1	1
Criminal Jury	18	13	4
Criminal Non-Jury Trials	4	6	8
Total Trials			
Drug Court:			
Adult, Juvenile Court Participants	59	50	49
Adult, Juvenile Drug Court Graduates	10	12	5
L.I.F.T. Court:			
Adult clients served in L.I.F.T. Court	15	15	10
Children served in L.I.F.T. Court	24	18	13

Grant Funding Sources

1. Department of Health and Human Services (Federal)
2. Office Administrator for the Courts (State)

Revenues

	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	6/30/24 Actual	2025 Budget
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Licenses and Permits	0	0	0	0
Intergovernmental Revenues	99,108	163,993	43,528	266,218
Charges for Goods and Services	246,152	324,812	129,892	403,538
Fines and Forfeits	0	26	0	0
Miscellaneous Revenues	388	0	776	0
Other Financing Sources	0	0	0	0
Transfers In	0	0	0	0
General Tax Support	1,332,475	1,217,567	665,782	1,010,141
Total	1,678,123	1,706,397	839,978	1,679,897

Expenditures

	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	6/30/24 Actual	2025 Budget
Salaries and Wages	861,315	945,599	443,372	1,053,085
Personnel Benefits	193,322	212,689	93,160	243,400
Supplies	23,460	27,583	4,209	23,546
Other Services and Charges	600,026	511,104	299,236	328,866
Intergovernmental Services	0	0	0	0
Capital Outlays	0	9,422	0	31,000

Interfund Payments for Services	0	0	0	0
Transfers Out	0	0	0	0
Total	1,678,123	1,706,397	839,978	1,679,897

Staffing

	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	6/30/24 Actual	2025 Budget
Full Time Equivalent	8.75	8.75	9.25	9.25