

Seattle Municipal Court

The Honorable Ed McKenna, Presiding Judge

(206) 684-5600

<http://www.seattle.gov/courts/>

Judicial Branch Overview

The Seattle Municipal Court (Court) is authorized by the State of Washington and the Seattle Municipal Code to adjudicate misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors, infractions (e.g., traffic infractions, parking violations, and other infractions), and civil violations including those related to building and zoning offenses. The Judicial Branch of Seattle government has seven elected judges and six appointed magistrates (5.5 FTEs). There are more cases processed here than any other municipal court in the State of Washington.

The Court is committed to excellence in providing fair, accessible and timely resolution of alleged violations of the Seattle Municipal Code in an atmosphere of respect for the public, Court employees and other government entities. The Court works closely with the Seattle Police Department, the City Attorney and the defense bar toward a safe and vital community. The Court also partners with community organizations to increase access to services for residents and enhance compliance with court-ordered conditions. The employees and volunteers of the Court are recognized as a valued part of the organization with many of them working directly with the defendants. Court staff involvement with defendants includes monitoring adherence to court orders for probation and day reporting, assessing treatment needs, and directing them to social service resources. Probation Officers and volunteer staff are in contact with defendants at the Court Resource Center offering services that include, but are not limited to:

- GED preparation classes;
- Self Awareness Workshop;
- Life skills classes;
- Re-entry assistance;
- assistance in voicemail, cell phone, as well as reduced fare ORCA cards;
- emergency food bags;
- hygiene kits and weather appropriate clothing bank items;
- employment readiness classes;
- chemical dependency evaluations;
- housing assistance;
- identification replacement assistance;
- assistance in applying for state Department of Social and Health Service benefits;
- veterans services;
- mental health treatment referrals; and
- direct computer connections to the Seattle Public Library.

Alternatives to jail have substantially reduced the City's jail expenditures and created opportunities for defendants to address underlying problems which lead to criminal behavior. Some of these alternatives include:

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- work crew;
- community service;
- day reporting included in an overall pre-trial strategy;
- random breath testing and urine analysis;
- Electronic Home Monitoring (EHM) and Secure Remote Alcohol Monitoring (SCRAM);
- ignition interlock devices; and
- pre-trial diversion as well as partnering with the City Attorney's Office Pre-filing Diversion Program.

SMC has provided **Interpreter Services** in 138 languages since 2005. A Court priority is ensuring access to justice for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deaf-blind (D/HH/DV) individuals. Free of charge interpreter services are provided for criminal and civil matters, including court hearings, trials, attorney-client interviews, probation and EHM appointments, prosecution witnesses, mental health evaluations, customer service, and translation of court forms and letters. In 2017, about 6,000 interpreted events were conducted with the help of 168 freelance interpreters in 80 languages, including American Sign Language. Approximately 40% of the requests are for Spanish language interpreters. Other frequent requests for interpretation include the Vietnamese, Somali, Amharic, Tigrinya, Cantonese, Mandarin, Russian, Punjabi, and Arabic languages. In 2017 SMC Interpreter Services designed and successfully implemented the first in the state Mentoring Program for non-credentialed court interpreters.

In addition to the three general trial courts, the jail arraignment calendar and the master jury trial calendar, the Court serves defendants and the community through four specialty court calendars:

The **Mental Health Court Calendar (MHC)**, established in 1999, is nationally recognized for serving misdemeanor offenders who are mentally ill or developmentally disabled. Defendants are expected to maintain treatment compliance, contact social service providers and adhere to other conditions of release. Once defendants opt into the court, frequent reviews are held. Judges become familiar with defendants, obtain input from dedicated probation staff, and make informed decisions while holding defendants responsible for their actions. The court holds contested competency and contested restoration hearings. Defendants may elect to opt out or enter into a disposition and remain under MHC supervision. Defendants can also be referred for supervision from mainstream courtrooms.

Seattle Community Court Needs Based Sentencing (NBS) Program implemented on January 9, 2017, is a similar model to the Seattle Community Court, which operated from 2005-2016. The new NBS program aims to build upon the success of Community Court by widening the diversion offer of community service and mandated social service contacts to all mainstream SMC courtrooms. The NBS sentence for individuals admitting to low level, quality of life crimes is in lieu of jail time. The program hopes to expand eligibility criteria and ultimately increase participation for individuals who may benefit from a need based rather than traditional sentence. The target population is individuals charged with non-domestic violence, non-driving under the influence low-level crimes including theft and criminal trespass, who may have some past criminal history. The City Attorney's Office may make an initial NBS offer for program entry or a judge may impose a NBS at time of sentencing later in the case. The defendant receives the opportunity to have his or her charges dismissed upon successful completion of the NBS conditions.

Seattle Veterans Treatment Court Calendar was established in 2012 to meet the needs of defendants who previously served in the military and were generally discharged. The Court works closely with the King County Department of Community and Human Services, the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to access agency resources available to veterans. Typically, the veterans come before the court with substance abuse and/or serious mental health issues. Treatment incorporates core values of military life including integrity, initiative and accountability.

The **Domestic Violence Calendars** were established in 2004 and are staffed by designated judges and specialized probation counselors. These courts preside over dedicated pretrial, trial, review and revocation court hearings each week. The Court addresses no contact order violations swiftly. Victim safety is a primary concern in these

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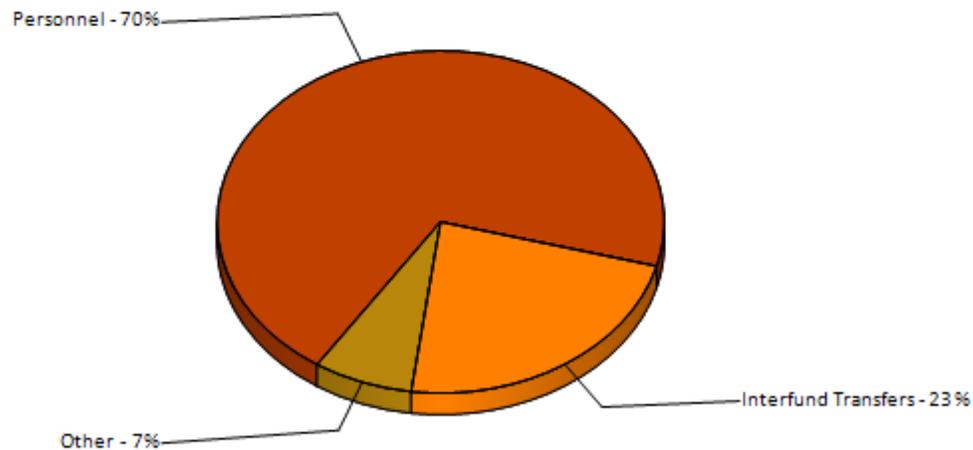
cases and special emphasis is placed on accountability for offender actions. Intensive court supervision increases compliance with court conditions and scheduling more immediate violation reviews provide greater assurance of public safety. The Court has also been integral in piloting a collaborative treatment modality known as Domestic Violence Intervention Project. This pilot has state-wide implications as a possible replacement for batterer's intervention treatment. The pilot began in June 2018 and will begin reporting out in the first quarter of 2019.

Budget Snapshot

Department Support	2018 Adopted	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed
General Fund Support	\$32,976,070	\$34,760,198	\$34,212,902
Total Operations	\$32,976,070	\$34,760,198	\$34,212,902
Total Appropriations	\$32,976,070	\$34,760,198	\$34,212,902
Full-time Equivalent Total*	215.10	215.10	215.10

* FTE totals are provided for information purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Personnel Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here.

2019 Adopted Budget - Expenditure by Category



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Budget Overview

The 2019 Adopted and 2020 Endorsed Budget provides resources to enable the Court to continue to adjudicate criminal cases, citations and infractions.

A priority for the Court is to continue preparing for the replacement of the Municipal Court Information System (MCIS). MCIS is over 27 years old and was developed internally using the legacy IBM Informix platform to capture key court case events and meet the reporting requirements of the state's Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). Over time, the Court has enhanced this system to provide important case management information, increased application functionality and improved data exchanges and public access. The Court and the City are highly dependent on MCIS to provide a continuing, permanent record of court case events, dates, hearings and outcomes. MCIS also tracks defendant compliance with court ordered sanctions and tracks all related fines and fees. Data related to the collection of \$47 million in fines and fees from the Seattle Police Department's parking and traffic ticket devices are highly dependent on MCIS. Daily data exchanges with the City of Seattle departments, King County and the State of Washington agencies rely on MCIS fully functioning with modern technology capabilities.

This project is included in the Seattle Department of Information Technology (Seattle IT) Capital Improvement Program, as part of the Criminal Justice Information System Replacement Project, with an estimated total cost of \$41 million over six years.

Schedule and Milestones:

- 2017: \$2.5 million appropriated to Seattle IT to conduct an options analysis comparing available options as well as hold vendor demonstrations and conduct research for information on technology capabilities, while concurrently documenting MCIS current business practices and requirements.
- 2018: \$5 million appropriated to develop an RFP, evaluate proposals, specific vendor demonstrations and interviews fit gap analysis and contract negotiations.
- 2019: \$3 million appropriated with the vendor on board in January and implementation kick off.

Implementation will continue through 2020-2021 with a go-live date in January 2022. Costs for 2020 through 2021 will be refined after vendor procurement.

In the 2018 Adopted Budget, Council provided partial, one-time funding for staff at the Court Resource Center (CRC). The 2019 Adopted and 2020 Endorsed Budget appropriates full, ongoing funding for the positions and will allow SMC to meet one of the recommendations of a 2017 audit conducted by the Office of the City Auditor. The CRC provides on-site social services to the Court's pre-trial defendants, people released from jail and on probation, clients with unstable housing and individuals who are homeless or at risk for homelessness.

Elected state, superior and district court judicial salaries are set by the Washington Citizen's Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials. By Ordinance 122112, SMC judicial salaries are set at 95% of the district court. A final salary schedule and wage increase was mandated effective September 2018 and the budget will fund this increase. Additionally, setting SMC judicial salaries at this level qualifies the City to receive a contribution from the state for technology improvements at SMC per the aforementioned ordinance.

A Real Estate Excise Tax- funded-Asset Preservation project for the Court will retrofit a vestibule of the Seattle Justice Center lobby. The project will address temperature and air volume controls for the staff that work on the first floor.

City Council Changes to the Proposed Budget

To fund staff for a city-wide criminal justice alignment review, the City Council reduced the Court Compliance budget by \$51,553 in 2019 and \$69,491 in 2020. A position funded in the Office for Civil Rights, will participate in

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a city-wide criminal legal system alignment as well as participate in assessing court programs related to probation.

The Council made an across-the-board reduction to all City General Fund appropriation authority in order to support other priorities. This reduction is included in the Court's 2019 Adopted and 2020 Endorsed budget.

Incremental Budget Changes

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	2019		2020	
	Budget	FTE	Budget	FTE
2018 Adopted Budget	\$ 32,976,070	215.10	\$ 32,976,070	215.10
Baseline Changes				
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	\$ 1,799,161	0.00	\$ 1,280,253	0.00
Adjustment for One-Time Budget Additions	-\$ 250,000	-2.00	-\$ 250,000	-2.00
Proposed Changes				
Court Resource Center Staffing	\$ 299,325	2.00	\$ 301,547	2.00
Judicial Salary Adjustment	\$ 34,500	0.00	\$ 34,500	0.00
Council Changes				
General Fund Appropriation Reduction	-\$ 23,751	0.00	-\$ 36,394	0.00
Reduce Court Compliance to Fund City-wide Criminal Justice Staffing	-\$ 51,553	0.00	-\$ 69,491	0.00
Court Resource Center Staffing	-\$ 23,554	0.00	-\$ 23,583	0.00
Total Incremental Changes	\$ 1,784,128	0.00	\$ 1,236,832	0.00
2019 Adopted/2020 Endorsed Budget	\$ 34,760,198	215.10	\$ 34,212,902	215.10

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Descriptions of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline Changes

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes - \$1,799,161

Citywide technical adjustments made in the baseline phase reflect changes to internal services costs, health care, and industrial insurance charges for the department. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process. This technical adjustment also transfers internal services costs for Human Resources, Finance and Administrative Services, and Information Technology from Finance General to the department. With this change, department budgets will better reflect support costs. Previously these costs were included in the Finance General budget.

Adjustment for One-Time Budget Additions - (\$250,000)/(2.00) FTE

This item includes budget reductions for one-time additions in the 2018 Adopted Budget:

- **Court Resource Center Staffing.** This reduces the Court's baseline budget by 2.0 FTE and \$250,000. This Council add in the 2018 Adopted Budget was funded with one-time funding.

Proposed Changes

Court Resource Center Staffing - \$299,325/2.00 FTE

The Council reduced this proposal during the adopted budget process for a technical adjustment. Refer to the Council Phase Changes section below. The proposed budget description follows:

The 2019-2020 Proposed Budget continues staffing of the Court Resource Center (CRC). In 2018, Council appropriated \$250,000 in one-time funding covering most of the cost of a Manager 1 and Strategic Advisor 1 in the CRC. The CRC provides on-site resources to court defendants, persons re-entering the community from either jail or prison and individuals who are homeless or at risk for homelessness. Services range from basic immediate needs for food and clothing to substance use disorder assessment and referrals, GED preparation and public benefit application assistance. All services are open to the public. These permanent positions will continue to build partnerships with community groups and other city departments, collect data and measure program outcomes, provide insight to race, social justice and equity needs of clients relative to operations. This staffing follows the recommendations of a 2017 audit conducted by the Office of the City Auditor.

Judicial Salary Adjustment - \$34,500

In Washington state, elected state, superior and district court judicial salaries are set by the Washington Citizen's Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials. As directed in Ordinance 122112, Seattle Municipal Court judicial salaries are set at 95% of the district court. A final salary schedule and wage increase was mandated effective September 2018 which the Court will absorb within their 2018 budget. The budget funds the 2018 ongoing increase. Additionally, setting SMC judicial salaries at this level qualifies the City to receive a contribution from the state for technology improvements at SMC. The state contribution is generally \$150,000 annually and is applied to the Trial Court Improvement Account in Finance General. The Court uses this account to fund one-time technology improvements such as the Electronic Court Filing Project completed in 2016.

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Council Changes

General Fund Appropriation Reduction - (\$23,751)

The Council made an across-the-board reduction to all General Fund appropriation authority in order to support other priorities. The percentage reduction in 2019 is about 0.07% and in 2020 about 0.1%.

Reduce Court Compliance to Fund City-wide Criminal Justice Staffing - (\$51,553)

The Council reduced the Court Compliance budget in 2019 and 2020 to provide partial funding for a Strategic Advisor 1 position in the Office of Civil Rights. A reduction to jail services in the FAS budget provides the remaining funding. The position will participate in city-wide criminal legal system alignment as well as participate in assessing court programs related to probation. The annual ongoing cost of this position is \$138,000.

Court Resource Center Staffing - (\$23,554)

The Strategic Advisor position added to staff the Court Resource Center was inadvertently added as a Strategic Advisor 3 rather than a Strategic Advisor 1. This adjustment corrects that and reduces funding to reflect the salary of a Strategic Advisor 1.

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City Council Provisos

There are no Council provisos.

Expenditure Overview

Appropriations	2018 Adopted	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed
Court Operations Budget Summary Level			
General Fund	15,370,648	15,441,923	15,581,673
Total for BSL: BO-MC-2000	15,370,648	15,441,923	15,581,673
Administration Budget Summary Level			
General Fund	12,001,572	13,730,639	13,018,192
Total for BSL: BO-MC-3000	12,001,572	13,730,639	13,018,192
Court Compliance Budget Summary Level			
General Fund	5,603,850	5,587,636	5,613,037
Total for BSL: BO-MC-4000	5,603,850	5,587,636	5,613,037
Department Total	32,976,070	34,760,198	34,212,902
Department Full-time Equivalent Total*	215.10	215.10	215.10

* FTE totals are provided for information purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Personnel Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here.

Budget Summary by Fund for Municipal Court

	2018 Adopted	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed
00100 - General Fund	32,976,070	34,760,198	34,212,902
Budget Totals for SMC	32,976,070	34,760,198	34,212,902

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Appropriations By Budget Summary Level (BSL) and Program

Court Operations Budget Summary Level

The purpose of the Court Operations Budget Summary Level is to hold hearings and address legal requirements for defendants and others who come before the Court. Some proceedings are held in formal courtrooms and others in magistrate offices, with the goal of providing timely resolution of alleged violations of City ordinances and misdemeanor crimes committed within the Seattle city limits.

Program Expenditures	2018 Adopted	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed
Court Operations	15,370,648	15,441,923	15,581,673
Total	15,370,648	15,441,923	15,581,673
Full-time Equivalents Total*	136.25	136.25	136.25

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Administration Budget Summary Level

The purpose of the Administration Budget Summary Level is to provide administrative controls, develop and provide strategic direction, and provide policy and program development.

Program Expenditures	2018 Adopted	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed
Citywide Indirect Costs	12,001,572	13,730,639	13,018,192
Total	12,001,572	13,730,639	13,018,192
Full-time Equivalents Total*	34.00	34.00	34.00

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Court Compliance Budget Summary Level

The purpose of the Court Compliance Budget Summary Level is to help defendants understand the Court's expectations and to assist them in successfully complying with court orders.

Program Expenditures	2018 Adopted	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed
Court Compliance	5,603,850	5,587,636	5,613,037
Total	5,603,850	5,587,636	5,613,037
Full-time Equivalents Total*	44.85	44.85	44.85

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