

# *Superior Court of the State of Washington for Snohomish County*

JUDGES  
GERALD L. KNIGHT  
RICHARD J. THORPE  
JAMES H. ALLENDOERFER  
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PRESIDING JUDGE  
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ARDEN J. BEDLE  
LESTER H. STEWART  
JACALYN D. BRUDVIK  
TRACY G. WAGGONER  
BRUCE I. WEISS

COURT ADMINISTRATOR  
SUPERIOR AND  
JUVENILE COURT  
RICHARD E. CARLSON

## MEMORANDUM

April 3, 2006

**TO:** Charter Review Commission

**RE:** Superior Court- An Overview

The Superior Court is a general jurisdiction trial court established under the Washington Constitution to hear Civil, Criminal and Juvenile trial proceedings as a part of the judicial branch of government. The Superior Court also hears appeals from Courts of Limited Jurisdiction and state administrative agencies as well as land use appeals from local governments, including the county. In 2005, 29,856 cases were filed in the Superior Court as follows:

<u>Criminal</u>	<u>Civil</u>	<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Probate/ Guardianship</u>	<u>Adoption/ Paternity</u>	<u>Mental Illness</u>	<u>Juvenile Dependency</u>	<u>Juvenile Offender</u>
3,109	14,006	3,351	1,566	1,154	882	3,999	1,789

The Snohomish County Superior Court currently has fourteen elected judges and five Court Commissioners appointed by the judges. Two judges and one Court Commissioner serve on rotating assignments to Juvenile Court at the Denney Juvenile Justice Center. Judges of the Superior Court are state officers, paid one half by the state and one half by the county. The Superior Court is responsible for the administration of trial and case

settings and assignments, the mandatory arbitration program, jury administration, family court investigations, the family law guardian ad litem program, three highly successful drug courts, the foster care citizen's review board, the volunteer guardian ad litem program in Juvenile Court, Juvenile [indigent defense](#), [Juvenile](#) Court probation and Juvenile Court detention. There are about 237 Superior Court full time employees and the court's 2006 general fund operating budget is approximately \$20.5 million [\(not including another \\$3,000,000 in state and federal grants\)](#). The Superior Court Administrator is selected by the Superior Court bench and is responsible to the bench to carry out day to day court responsibilities together with the Presiding Judge. The Presiding Judge is elected to serve a two year term by the Superior Court bench and has the responsibilities set forth in GR 29.

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Under Article 11, Sec. 4, of the Washington Constitution, a County Home Rule Charter may not affect the election of Superior Court judges or the jurisdiction of the court.

6 Attachments: Washington Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. 5  
Washington Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. 6  
RCW 2.09.010-020  
RCW 13.04.035  
GR 29  
Organization chart