

Superior Court

Whatcom County's three Superior Court judges and three full-time and two part-time court commissioners hear all cases involving: adult felonies, all juvenile offenses, divorce, child custody, support matters, probate, guardianships, adoptions, property claims in excess of \$50,000, paternity actions, mental incompetency, and abused or neglected children. The Superior Court Administrator oversees judicial operations and may also supervise related speciality programs.

FTE's for this department

Year	2005	2006	2007	*2008	*2009	*2010
FTE	37.20	16.50	20.50	20.50	20.50	20.50

**budget*

See Clerk section for organization chart.

Mission & Objectives

Mission

Provide for justice in Whatcom County by ensuring that the court's administration of justice adheres to and advances performance standards for:

- ◆ Access to justice
- ◆ Expedition and timeliness
- ◆ Equality, fairness and integrity
- ◆ Independence and accountability
- ◆ Public trust and confidence

Objectives

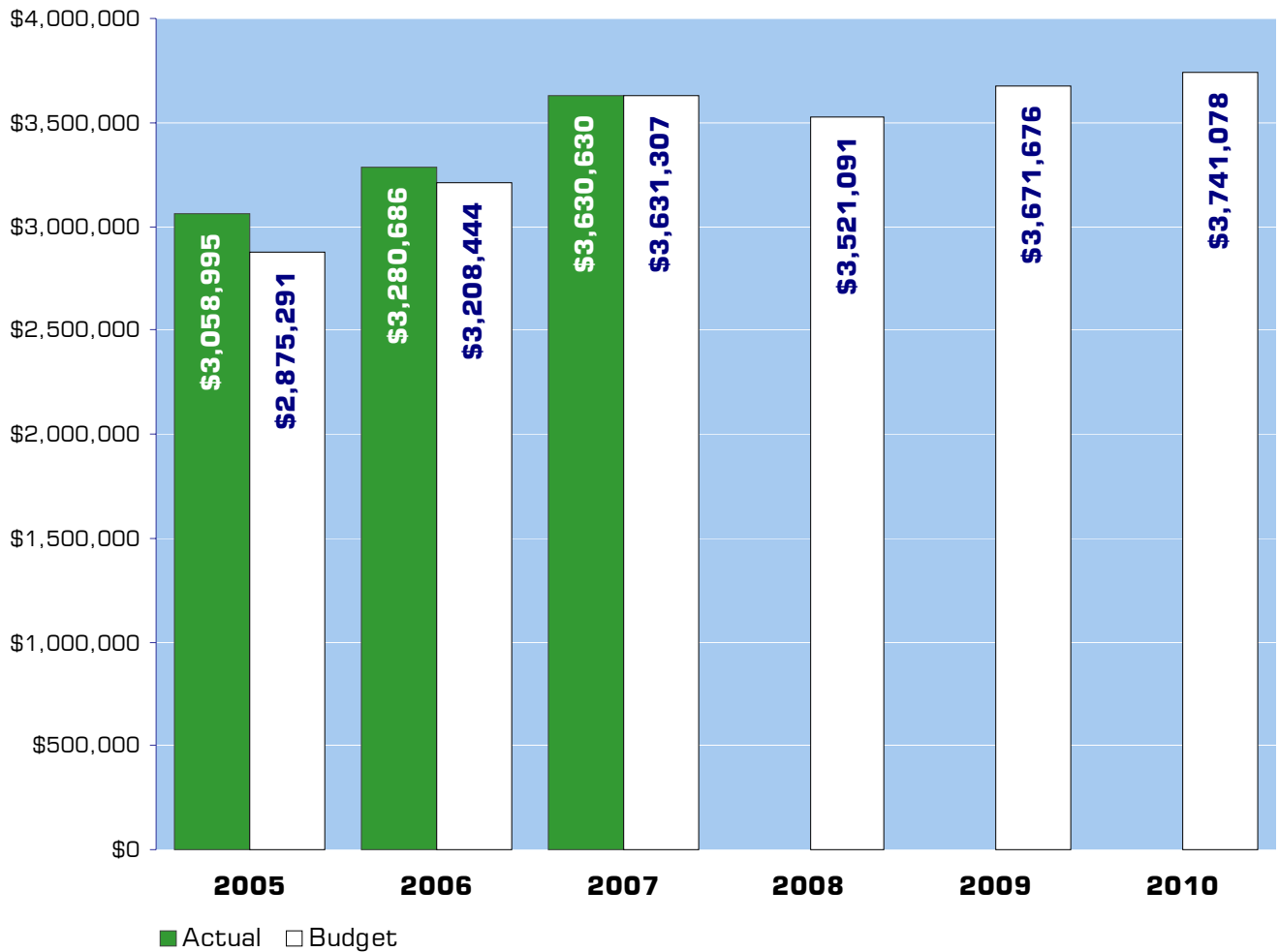
Court Operations

- Effectively manage criminal and non-criminal cases and calendars so as to assure expeditious resolution and completion within established time frames.
- Reduce backlog of unresolved criminal cases by 20%.
- Design and implement case management practices in probate, guardianship and civil case, to include at-the-time-of-filing complexity assessment, court ordered timelines and dispute resolution alternatives. Implement volunteer-based guardianship monitoring program.
- Implement improved in-court practices to more efficiently access virtual files and electronic calendars.
- Explore and implement in-court document generation, so as to avoid subsequent hearings for entry of orders.
- Reduce dependency guardian ad litem costs.
- Replace two courtroom video recorders in 2009 and one in 2010.

Drug Courts

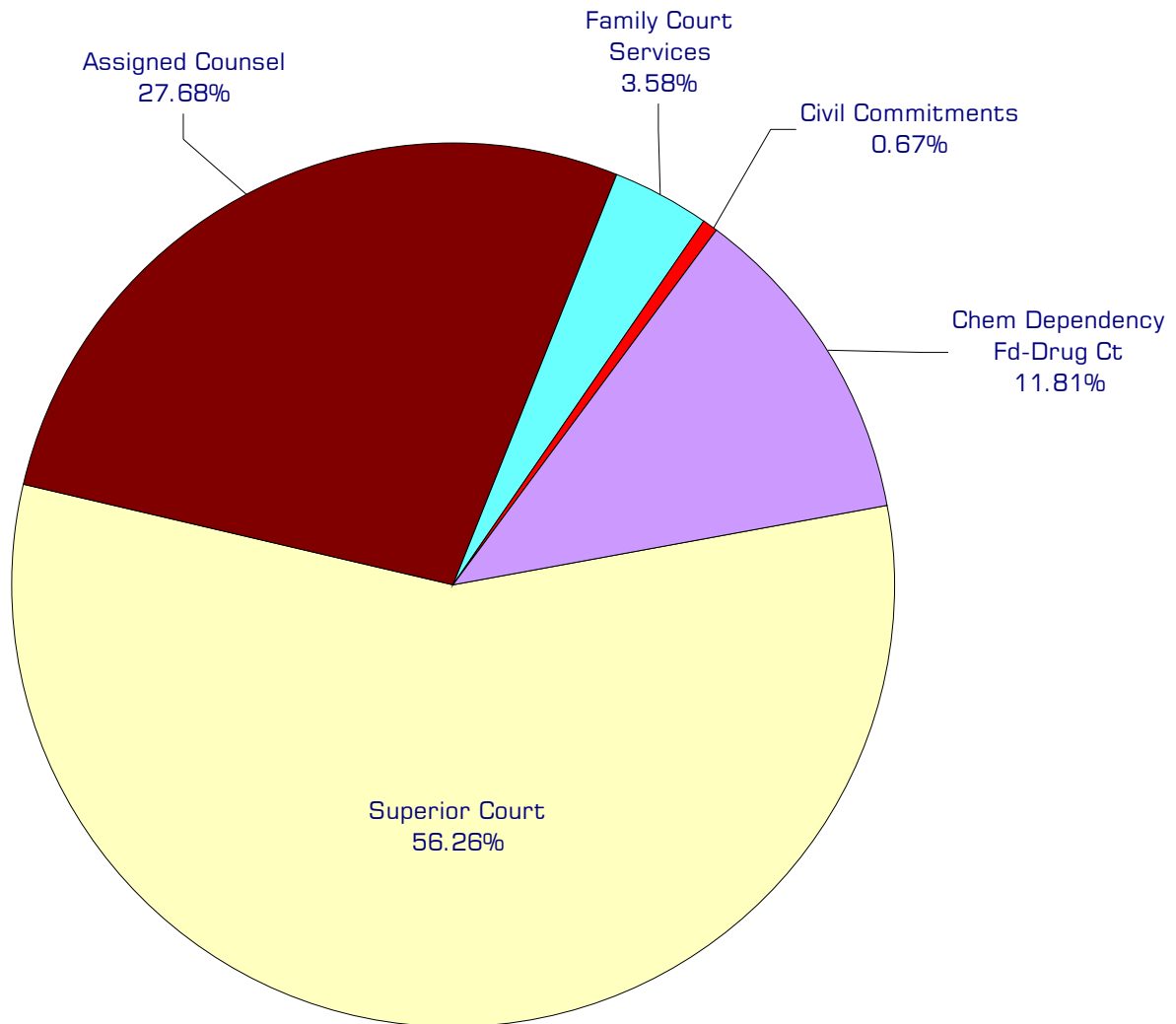
- Expedite enrollment approvals.
- Continue to seek stable funding sources.

Expenditure Trends



NOTE: Capital expenditures and interfund operating transfers are not shown to more accurately reflect ongoing operational costs.

2009-2010 Budget by Program



NOTE: Capital expenditures and interfund operating and residual equity transfers are not shown to more accurately reflect ongoing operational costs.

Program Summary

	Actual 2005	Actual 2006	Actual 2007	Budget 2008	Budget 2009	Budget 2010
OPERATIONS						
General Fund						
3100 Superior Court	1,673,653	1,698,731	1,923,051	1,876,177	2,063,977	2,098,572
3111 Training/Registration	-	1,775	2,236	4,000	4,000	4,000
3140 Assigned Counsel	899,474	1,074,975	1,170,884	1,088,877	1,019,972	1,031,795
3160 Family Court Services	102,721	106,194	113,330	118,687	129,488	135,610
3170 Drug Courts Grant	373,553	346,715	417,551	383,350	-	-
3180 Civil Commitments	9,594	52,296	3,578	50,000	25,000	25,000
124 Chem Dependency Fd-Drug Ct	-	-	-	-	429,239	446,101
<i>Total Superior Court Operations</i>	3,058,995	3,280,686	3,630,630	3,521,091	3,671,676	3,741,078
CAPITAL						
General Fund						
3100 Superior Court	-	-	-	-	23,370	15,000
<i>Total Superior Court Capital</i>	-	-	-	-	23,370	15,000
TOTAL SUPERIOR COURT	3,058,995	3,280,686	3,630,630	3,521,091	3,695,046	3,756,078
Percent Change from Previous Year	8.2%	7.2%	10.7%	-3.0%	4.9%	1.7%

2009-2010 Funding Sources

	2009	2010
Intergovernmental Revenues	343,360	343,360
Charges for Services	97,807	97,807
Miscellaneous Revenues	13,920	13,920
Chemical Dep Fund Balance	217,581	234,443
General Fund	2,999,008	3,051,548
Total Funding	3,671,676	3,741,078

Intergovernmental Revenue

The court receives reimbursement, in the form of grants from the federal and state governments, for costs incurred in connection with Drug Court, civil commitment, juvenile actions, and child support enforcement.

Charges for Services

The Superior Court charges for filings and various other services, including Drug Court fees. Judicial fines and forfeits are not included as Superior Court revenue.

Miscellaneous Revenues

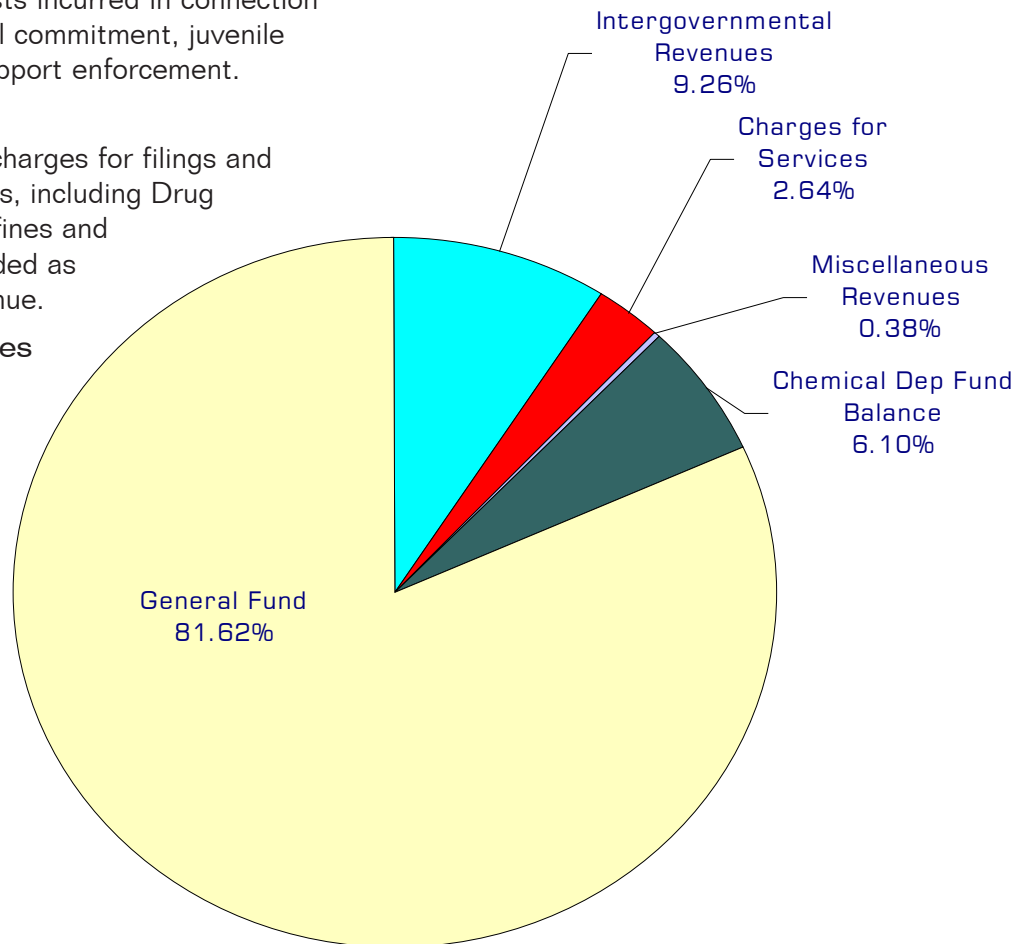
The Superior Court collects a surcharge on marriage licenses, as well as revenue from other miscellaneous sources.

Chemical Dependency Fund Balance

Beginning in 2009, Drug Court expenditures in excess of grants and fees will be funded by the newly established Chemical Dependency /Mental Health Fund.

General Fund

Undedicated General Fund resources.



Performance / Activity Measures

	Actual 2005	Actual 2006	Actual 2007	Projected 2008	Projected 2009	Projected 2010
Ratio of active criminal cases pending to cases resolved				101%	110%	115%

Figures in excess of 100% indicate that more cases are being resolved than being filed; the backlog is being reduced. The shift in ratio of filing and resolutions was made to match the state reporting standard.

Expenditures Summary

	Actual 2005	Actual 2006	Actual 2007	Budget 2008	Budget 2009	Budget 2010
GENERAL FUND						
3100 Superior Court						
Salaries & Wages	949,152	940,175	1,098,609	1,056,765	1,152,711	1,170,488
Benefits	147,152	161,645	231,975	256,639	278,902	288,162
Supplies	18,569	11,319	25,195	6,270	23,500	20,000
Other Services & Charges	558,780	585,592	567,272	556,503	608,864	619,922
Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-	23,370	15,000
<i>Total Superior Court</i>	1,673,653	1,698,731	1,923,051	1,876,177	2,087,347	2,113,572
<i>Percent Change from Previous Year</i>	9.2%	1.5%	13.2%	-2.4%	11.3%	1.3%
3111 Training/Registration						
Supplies	-	131	461	1,400	1,400	1,400
Other Services & Charges	-	1,644	1,775	2,600	2,600	2,600
<i>Total Training/Registration</i>	-	1,775	2,236	4,000	4,000	4,000
<i>Percent Change from Previous Year</i>	0.0%	0.0%	26.0%	78.9%	0.0%	0.0%
3140 Assigned Counsel						
Salaries & Wages	98,543	101,840	88,559	110,053	100,471	106,845
Benefits	31,837	37,557	36,020	52,489	51,859	56,148
Supplies	-	451	151	1,500	1,500	1,500
Other Services & Charges	769,094	935,127	1,046,154	924,835	866,142	867,302
<i>Total Assigned Counsel</i>	899,474	1,074,975	1,170,884	1,088,877	1,019,972	1,031,795
<i>Percent Change from Previous Year</i>	17.8%	19.5%	8.9%	-7.0%	-6.3%	1.2%
3160 Family Court Services						
Salaries & Wages	77,352	77,829	81,065	82,482	91,458	94,716
Benefits	25,257	28,365	32,265	36,205	38,030	40,894
Supplies	112	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Total Family Court Svcs</i>	102,721	106,194	113,330	118,687	129,488	135,610
<i>Percent Change from Previous Year</i>	9.4%	3.4%	6.7%	4.7%	9.1%	4.7%
3170 Drug Court*						
Salaries & Wages	160,057	133,847	159,299	166,871	-	-
Benefits	52,319	38,492	52,552	61,672	-	-
Supplies	5,043	4,761	2,382	3,000	-	-
Other Services & Charges	156,134	169,615	203,318	151,807	-	-
<i>Total Drug Courts</i>	373,553	346,715	417,551	383,350	-	-
<i>Percent Change from Previous Year</i>	2.1%	-7.2%	20.4%	-8.2%	-100.0%	0.0%
3180 Civil Commitments						
Other Services & Charges	9,594	52,296	3,578	50,000	25,000	25,000
<i>Total Civil Commitments</i>	9,594	52,296	3,578	50,000	25,000	25,000
<i>Percent Change from Previous Year</i>	-86.6%	445.1%	-93.2%	1297.4%	-50.0%	0.0%
TOTAL GENERAL FUND	3,058,995	3,280,686	3,630,630	3,521,091	3,265,807	3,309,977
<i>Percent Change from Previous Year</i>	8.2%	7.2%	10.7%	-3.0%	-7.3%	1.4%

* Drug Court moved to the Chemical Dependency Fund beginning 2009.

Expenditures Summary continued

	Actual 2005	Actual 2006	Actual 2007	Budget 2008	Budget 2009	Budget 2010
124 CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY FUND - Drug Court						
Salaries & Wages	-	-	-	-	187,809	199,299
Benefits	-	-	-	-	66,326	71,270
Supplies	-	-	-	-	4,000	4,000
Other Services & Charges	-	-	-	-	171,104	171,532
<i>Total Chemical Dependency/Mental</i>	-	-	-	-	429,239	446,101
<i>Percent Change from Previous Year</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.9%
TOTAL SUPERIOR COURT	3,058,995	3,280,686	3,630,630	3,521,091	3,695,046	3,756,078
<i>Percent Change from Previous Year</i>	8.2%	7.2%	10.7%	-3.0%	4.9%	1.7%

Services

Adult Drug Court

Intensive case management and monitoring of long-term drug users, involving treatment and reward and punishment.

Dispute Resolution Center

Administer family law mediation program; scheduling & recruitment/training.

Family Drug Court

Case management for drug using parents in dependency cases.

Guardians ad Litem (GAL)

Provide court ordered independent investigations regarding alleged incompetents, abused children and children whose parents are in dispute.

Assigned Counsel

Provide indigency screening, Superior/District Court criminal actions, parents in dependencies and GAL applicants.

Mandatory Arbitration

Provide arbitration for certain civil cases with limited amounts in dispute. Maintain strike-list of 47 arbitrators.

Family Law Courthouse Facilitator

Provide assistance with domestic relations matters for those without attorneys. Clerk is required to provide assistance and the use of a Facilitator is optional.