

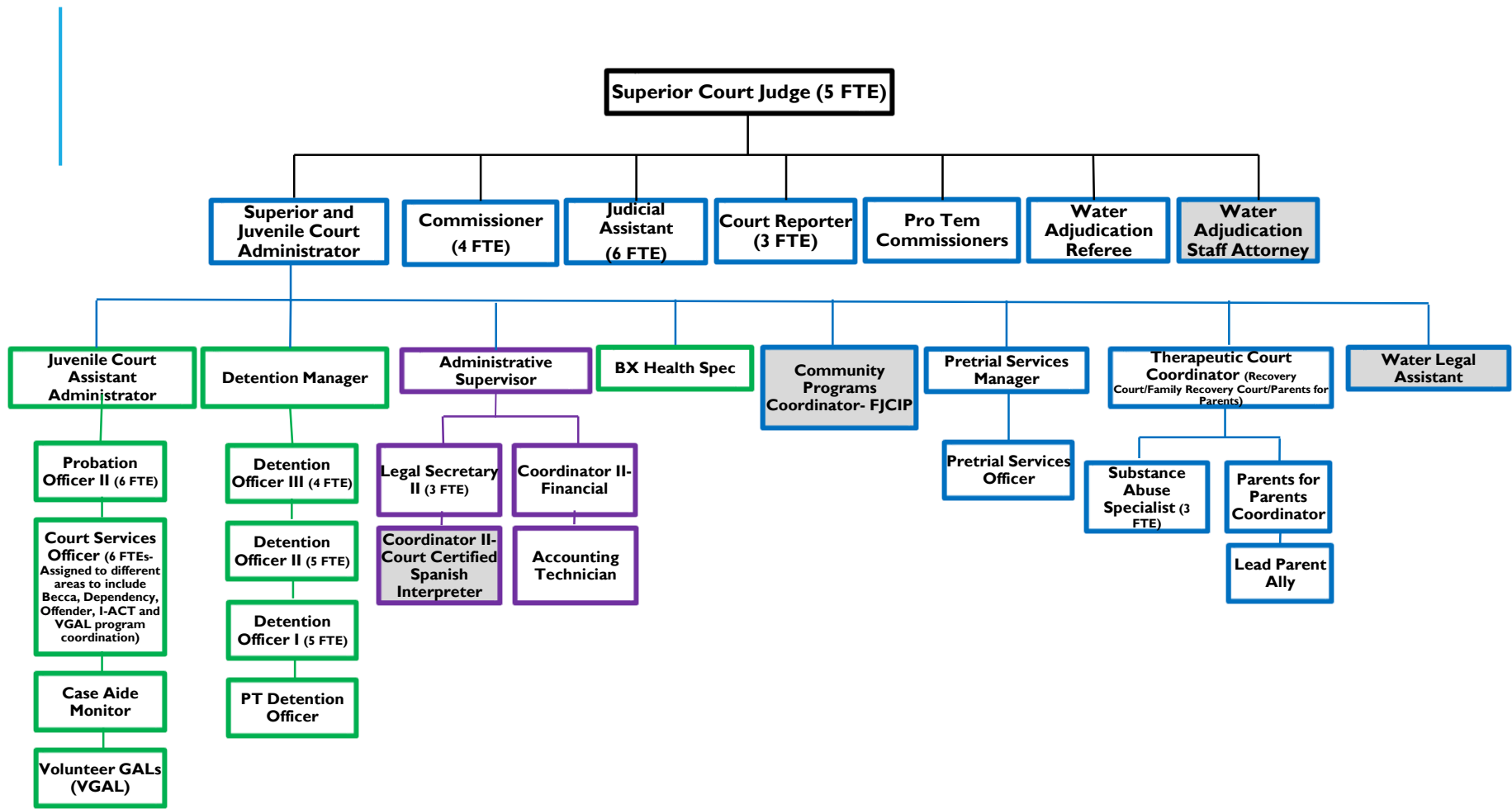


# WHATCOM COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT ADMINISTRATION JUVENILE DIVISION

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Annual Report to the  
Council 7-23-24

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

- State of Washington ethics opinion 23-02 outlined that there must be a clear separation between judicial and executive functions. Juvenile Court is part of the judicial branch. There is a shared Superior and Juvenile Court Administrator. All employees are GR 29 employees.
- Superior Court Administration is now in the same physical space as Juvenile Court Administration (Suite 501).
- Juvenile Court Guardian Ad Litem reclassified to Court Services Officers to allow for greater ability to cross train and meet changing caseload needs within Juvenile Court.
- All new probation positions hired will be Court Services Officers (not probation officers).



**SUPERIOR COURT ADMINISTRATION  
ORGANIZATION CHART--  
JUDICIAL BRANCH (JULY 2024)**

Current Vacant/Frozen Positions:  
 Juvenile Detention Officer I, Juvenile Detention Officer III (Shift Supervisor), Case Aide Monitor, Community Programs Coordinator-FJCIP, Coordinator II- Court Certified Spanish Interpreter, Judicial Assistant (for 5<sup>th</sup> Judge), Water Adjudication Staff Attorney and Legal Assistant

# WHATCOM COUNTY JUVENILE COURT

- Encompasses Juvenile Court Services Programs, Juvenile Detention and Juvenile Administration.
- Juvenile Court staff work with youth and families that come in contact with the Juvenile Justice System either through civil cases (Dependency, Truancy, At Risk Youth, Child In Need of Services) or criminal cases (including diversion).
- Works with children/youth 0-18+.
- Opportunities for prevention and intervention with youth and families across the variety of ways contact with the court is made.
- Focus on competency development balanced with safety and accountability.
- Governed by RCW Title 13.
- Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) since 2004. Use core strategies to ensure we are detaining those youth who need to be detained, and keeping others in the community consistent with public safety. JDAI's mission is for all youth involved in the juvenile justice system to have opportunities to develop into healthy, productive adults.

# WHATCOM JUVENILE COURT PROGRAMS

Criminal	Civil
Diversion	Becca: Truancy, At Risk Youth, Child in Need of Services
Pre Adjudication (Intake) Supervision	Volunteer GAL (VGAL) Program
Post Adjudication Supervision	Title 13 (Dependency) GAL
Detention Services	Parents for Parents (P4P)
Behavioral Health <i>(New)</i>	Behavioral Health <i>(New)</i>

# DIVERSION

- Over ½ of the arrest referrals from the prosecutors' office are diverted from the court system.
- Diversion is the least restrictive way in which there is accountability for juveniles who are referred for misdemeanor, gross misdemeanors, and some Class C felonies.
- All youth who go through the diversion program meet with court services/probation staff. Staff work with the youth to balance intervention that provides accountability with opportunities for skill building.
- Diversion can include referral to services and programs such as: Community Links, Teen Court, behavioral health services, youth/family mediation, classes provided by the Dispute Resolution Center, substance use assessment and community service. A new program this year is the Resilience in Stressful Environment (RISE) program developed and provided by Lifeline Connections. RISE is a four week course focusing on educating youth about mental health, providing tools and strategies and building confidence in the youths ability to utilize these tools.
- Youth can have multiple diversions.

# PRE ADJUDICATION SUPERVISION

- Case management and monitoring
- Referral to services if youth or family is willing/interested
- Advocacy with schools and community providers
- Support continuum of care
- Continually (informally) assessing needs and encouraging forward movement toward engagement in services
- Mediation with respect to reasonable house rules

# POST ADJUDICATION SUPERVISION

- Conditions of probation may include curfew, substance use testing, mandatory school attendance, and counseling and/or treatment.
- **CMAP Case Management**
  - Mapping: "Discovery" - administer the risk assessment; build rapport to elicit valid and reliable information.
  - Finding the Hook: "Motivation" - identify incentives and disincentives for change using a Motivational Interviewing (MI) approach; agree on targets, goals, and action steps; and assess for readiness, importance and confidence.
  - Moving Forward: "Intervention" - provide youth with opportunities to build pro-social skills and to increase self-efficacy through evidence programming.
  - Reviewing and Supporting: "Monitor Progress" - increase incentives; remove obstacles; provide reinforcement; teach maintenance strategies; and reassess for change.
- **Referral to services/programs**
  - Behavioral Health Services
  - Community Links (COS)- low risk youth. Interactive seminars from a variety of community organizations, offering youth and their connected adults the opportunity to build skills, make connections, and strengthen relationships between one another.
  - I-ACT- moderate/high risk youth. Intensive program. Phase one is designed to promote skill development with regard to social skills, self-control and problem solving. The second phase focuses on real life application of skills.
- Addresses violations with accountability, community safety and skill development. Individualized, gradual sanctions. Examples include: EHM, referral for behavioral health evaluation, completing decisional balance, community service, opportunity to regain compliance, detention, resource referrals, evidence based programs etc.



# DETENTION

- **Juvenile Detention is a safe and secure environment for youth who have been arrested for an offense, a warrant or who are serving a sentence imposed by the court.**
- **Medical services: health screening, assessment, treatment, medication administration, and emergency services.**
- **Mental Health: provided by a contracted behavioral health provider in the facility several days per week. Staff also facilitate youth contacting behavioral health crisis services when needed.**
- **School programming: provided by Northwest Educational Service District 189 to all youth in the facility. In addition to standards subjects, school programming also includes: art, book club, cooking, career and financial literacy, library, food handler's card, GED preparation, health, life skills, physical education, and presentations by community organizations.**
- **Substance use screening, assessment, and treatment (including medically assisted treatment). Those engaged with substance use providers in the community are able to continue treatment during their stay here.**
- **Programming from community groups such as AA, Church Group, Music, Poetry etc.**
- **Youth are provided opportunities to develop life skills such as self-awareness, empathy, creative thinking, effective communication, and problem solving. Youth have the opportunity to learn prosocial engagement, emotional regulation, tools to manage stress/conflict, maintaining physical health, and processing/healing trauma.**
- **Transition planning aimed to help youth successfully reintegrate back into the community, includes coordinating with families, schools, and community providers.**

# BECCA PROGRAMS

Truancy	At Risk Youth (ARY)	Child in Need of Services (CHINS)
<p>Filed by schools in response to unexcused absences of youth. For young children, parent is respondent. Goal is to have the youth attending and engaging in school.</p>	<p>Filed by the parent to have court support in addressing high risk behaviors by youth such as running away or substance use. Goal is engagement in services to stabilize youth.</p>	<p>Filed by the youth seeking alternative living arrangements while the parent(s) and youth engage in services. Goal is reunification after stabilization.</p>
Case Management	Case Management	Case Management
Referrals to Services	Referrals to Services	Referrals to Services
Facilitate Community Truancy Boards	Collaboration with DCYF	Collaboration with DCYF
Youth and Family Engagement	Youth and Family Engagement	Youth and Family Engagement

# VOLUNTEER GUARDIANS AD LITEM (VGAL)

- Volunteer Advocate program began in Whatcom County in 2008.
- All dependent youth are represented by either a VGAL or Juvenile Court staff assigned to GAL work. Currently we have 30 trained volunteers.
- VGAL's conduct an independent investigation, make reports and recommendations to the court at scheduled hearings, monitor the progress of the child and the parties' compliance with court orders, and continually advocating for the best interests of the child.
- We continue to recruit and train volunteers. Core training is provided in collaboration with Washington Association of Child Advocacy Programs (WACAP).
- Decreased petitions have resulted in smaller caseload sizes and consequently more time spent per case advocating for best interests of children. There is greater overall diversity in the program supporting increased effectiveness in advocating for children from all backgrounds with complex needs.

# PARENTS FOR PARENTS PROGRAM (P4P)

- Parents for Parents program is in all Washington counties. Whatcom County began participating in 2015.
- P4P is a peer mentoring and education program that connects parents who have successfully navigated the child welfare system to parents who have recently become engaged with Child Protective Services.
- Components of the program include: support at court hearings, educational dependency 101 and 201 classes, and on-going peer mentoring support.
- P4P requires strong partnerships with all child welfare court partners to be successful in its approach.
- Whatcom P4P provides both in person and virtual education classes and mentoring support.
- Recent studies have shown P4P to have a positive impact on reunification rates.

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

- Grant funded for the current state fiscal year.
- Collaboration with Whatcom Health and Community Services.
- Behavioral Health Specialist starts in August 2024. This is a new program and will require some program development work.
- The scope of work will include engaging with youth and young adults into resources and supports with a focus on Opioid/SUD services, medication assisted treatment (MAT), and other behavioral health and wellness services.
- Able to provide support to youth who come in contact either through criminal or civil cases.
- Will participate in probation staffing and will run a weekly skills group in detention.

# JUVENILE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

- Supports the administrative side of providing juvenile court services (reception, processing court paperwork, ensuring paperwork is available to youth and families at the court hearing, generating/ mailing court forms, maintaining program records, supporting financial side of contracts/program management).
- Facilitates sealing of records, record destruction and reinstatement requests for unrepresented litigants.
- Schedules interpretation services.
- Supports the court in maintaining resource information available in lobby.
- Until this month, was interim minor guardianship facilitator. This is transitioning to the Superior Court Clerks Office. There will be a full time, dedicated minor guardianship facilitator.

# THE YEAR AHEAD

- **Juvenile Detention will be participating in the first cohort for the Health Care Authority's Reentry Program.**
- **Participation in the Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Program (FJCIP) dedicated to improving dependency court operations and case outcomes for children and families involved in child welfare. Funding is provided to facilitate an in person cross system collaborative training.**
- **Additional DBT (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy) Training for all juvenile detention and court services/probation staff.**
- **Developing program for behavioral health specialist.**

# CHALLENGES

- Acuity (high risk, high need) of youth coming in contact with our system.
- Access to behavioral health services, including crisis services, residential treatment/support services and intensive wrap around services.
- Staffing and ability to adjust programs to meet the changing needs of our population.
- Legislative changes (example: updates to Keeping Families Together Act with respect to Opioid epidemic or movement to increase age of jurisdiction for juvenile court) and Supreme Court decisions such as JuCR 7.16 (limits the Court's authority to issue warrants).
- Juvenile Rehabilitation pausing intakes to the Juvenile Institutions.