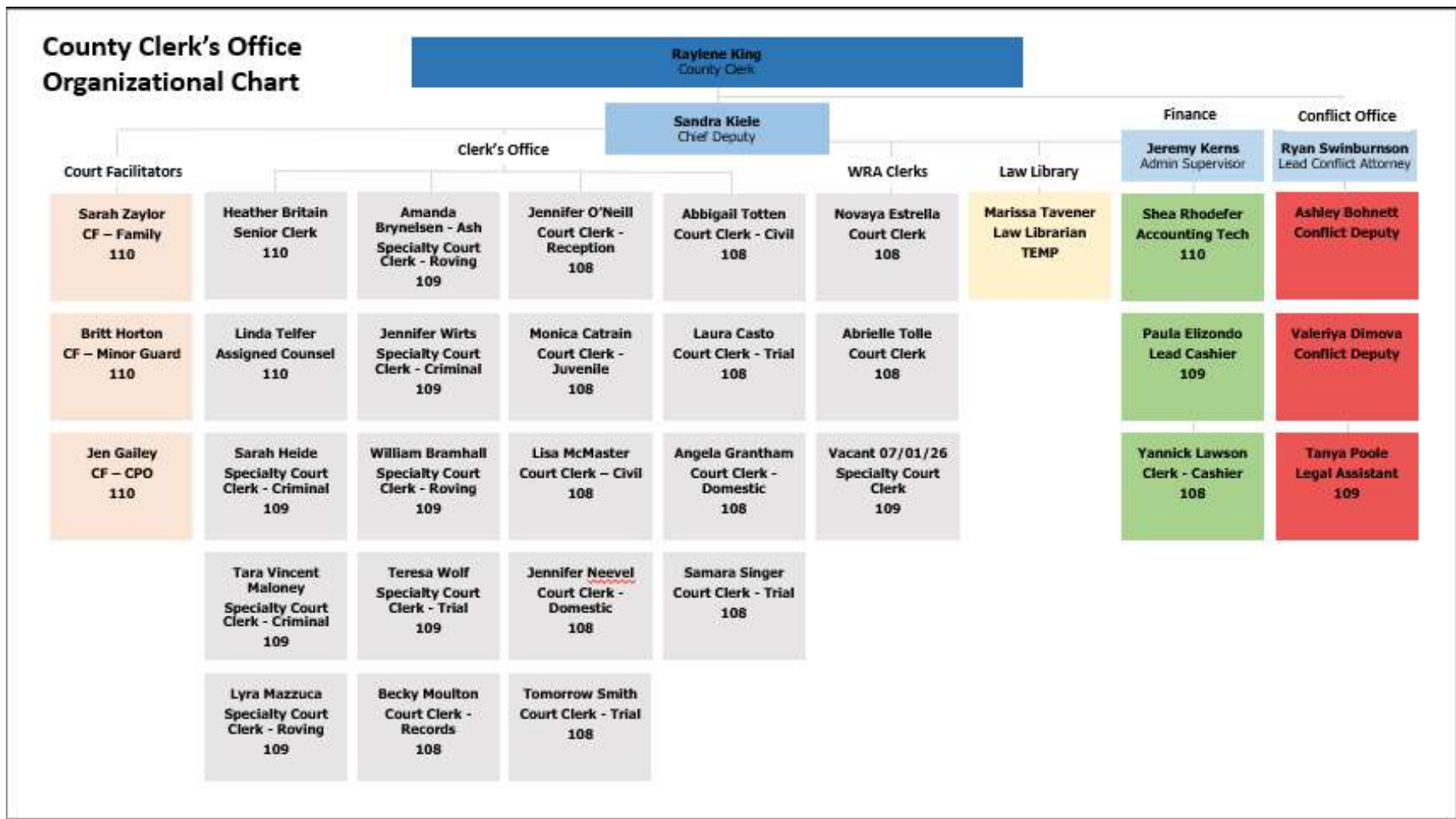




WHATCOM COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT CLERK'S OFFICE

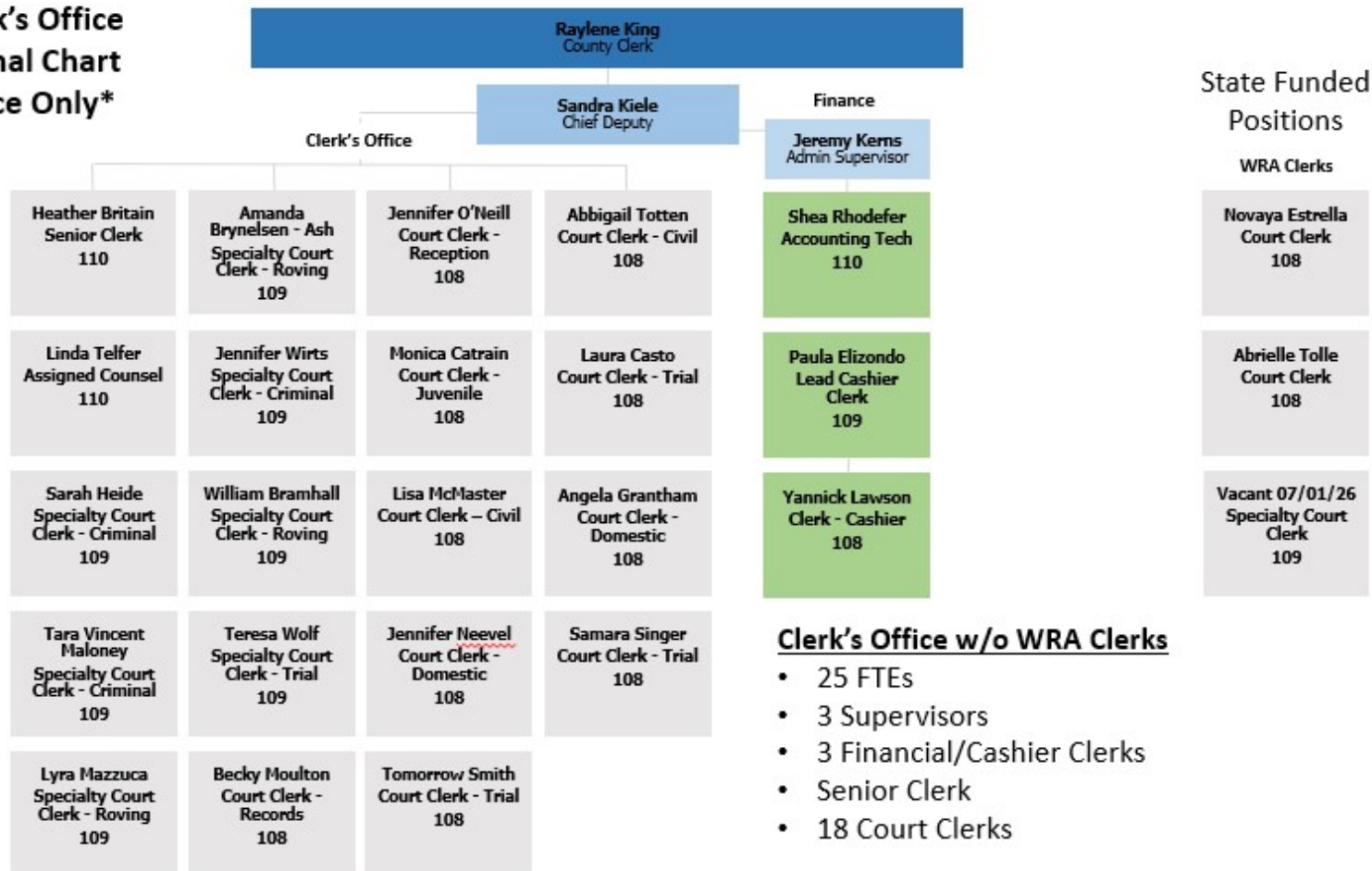
Annual Report
to the Council
06-23-26

2026 COUNTY CLERK'S ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



CLERK'S ONLY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

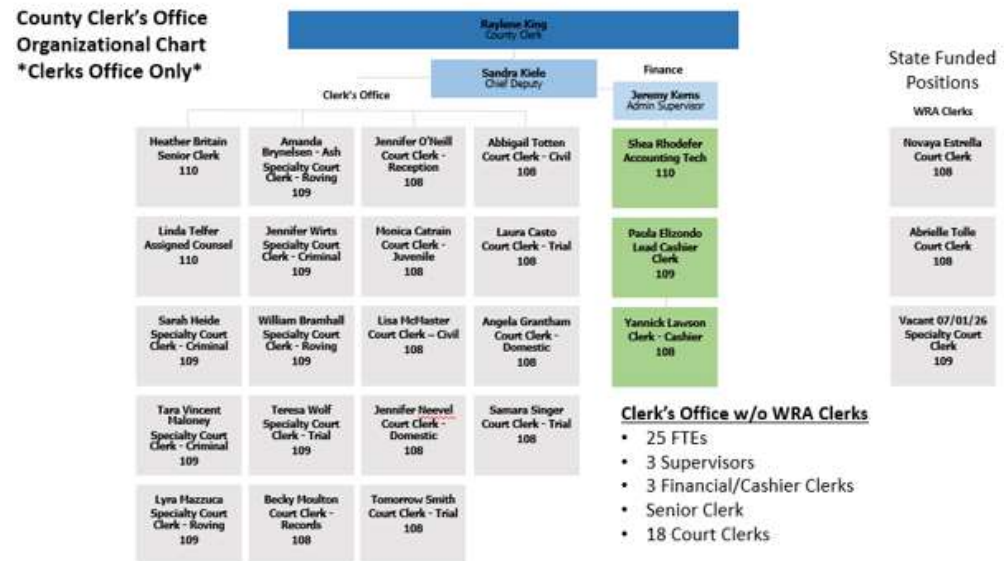
County Clerk's Office Organizational Chart * Clerks Office Only*



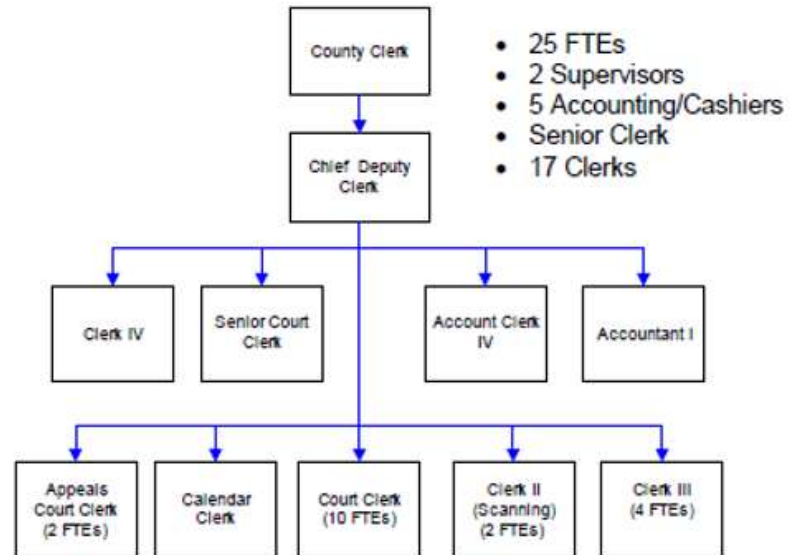
COMPARISON FROM 2008 TO 2026

- In 2008, there were 3 Judges and 3 Commissioners.
- In 2026, there are 5 Judges and 5 Commissioners.
- It is recommended to have 3 Clerks per Judicial Officer. Currently we are 1.9 Clerks per Judicial Officer.

Current Clerk Office Org Chart (Clerks Only)



This is the Org Chart from 2008 Clerks Office.



WHATCOM COUNTY CLERK ROLES

- Clerk's Office
- Court Facilitators
- Law Library
- Office of Assigned Counsel
- Conflict Office

CLERK'S OFFICE

- **Administrator of court records and exhibits:** Receives, processes, and preserves forever all documents filed in Superior Court
- **Quasi-judicial officer:** Serves a quasi-judicial function in reviewing court documents for possible errors, performs acts as required by law, issues letters of testamentary, warrants of arrest, orders of sale, writs of execution, garnishment, attachments, restitution and set up judgements.
- **Ex-Officio Clerk of the Court:** Under the State Constitution requires the clerk to be present at all court sessions, serving as neutral record keeper of the hearing. Clerk must also be present at every court hearing or trial to receive, record, and preserve all exhibits.
- **Financial Officer of the Court:** Receives court ordered legal financial obligations and fees, issues payments from clerk registry as directed by court order (i.e., child support, etc.)

CASE TYPES

- Civil / DV
- Criminal
- Family Law
- Probate / Guardianships
- Paternity/Adoptions
- Mental Illness (ITA)
- Juvenile Civil (CHINS, ARY, Truancy, Dependency)
- Juvenile Offenders

WHATCOM COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT CASELOAD

	Criminal	Civil	Domestic	Probate/ Guardianship	Adoption/ Parentage	Mental Illness/ Alcohol	Juvenile Dependency	Juvenile Offender	Total Filings for Year
2018	1,721	2,277	769	631	132	221	657	311	6,719
2019	1,542	2,364	835	714	131	224	660	229	6,699
2020	1,626	1,306	700	664	87	222	340	167	5,112
2021	1,270	1,316	726	1,029	84	252	398	133	5,238
2022	1,463	1,617	686	1,233	91	270	602	166	6,128
2023	1,483	1,894	788	1,204	80	252	448	192	6,341
2024	1,486	2,283	748	1,165	155	225	599	201	6,862
2025	1,344	4,508	774	1,259	137	244	519	239	9,024

COURT FACILITATOR VS. DV ADVOCATE

Facilitator

- Court Facilitator
- Neutral Court Employee
- Explains Procedures & Forms
- Provides Legal Information not advice
- Does not represent any party
- Ensures access to a court Process.

DV Advocate

- Supports a specific individual
- Assists with rights, safety, and resources
- Provides support and guidance
- Focuses on the individual's needs and interests
- Helps clients navigate challenges related to their case

STATE COURT FACILITATOR DATA

- More than half said their income is less than \$50,000
- More than half said they learned about the Facilitator through court staff versus other methods.
- Over 60 % receiving assistance were female and 35% were male
- The majority received aid in a Family Law case
- Protection Order Facilitators are new to the program as of 2026

COURT FACILITATORS

- Minor Guardianship Facilitator
 - Uniformed Guardianship Act
- Adult Guardianship Facilitator
 - Combined Statistics for Minor/Adult 913 calls and 262 appointments for June 2025 to June 2026
- Family Law Facilitator
 - 2024 -4415 People Assisted
 - 2025- 7183 People by hardcopies via clerk's office, phone, and email
- Protection Order Facilitator
 - April 2026 start date for this position
- DV Commission Partnership (Advocates)
 - Helped 31 since March 2025 and 107 Contacts

DVSAS - DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES

- The advocate can help with:
- Domestic Violence Protection Orders
- Sexual Assault Protection Orders
- Stalking Protection Orders
- Safety Planning
- If the advocate is not here, or is working with someone else please contact the 24-hour Helpline 1-877-715-1563 or visit the downtown center at 1407 Commercial Street, Bellingham, WA 98225

DVSAS PROTECTION ORDER ADVOCATE

- Daily Hours for Advocate in Courthouse in English & Spanish
- Mondays 8:30 – 12:30
- Tuesdays 11:00 – 2:30
- Wednesday 8:30 – 12:30
- Thursday 11:00 – 2:30
- Friday 10:00 – 2:00

PROTECTION ORDER STATISTICS

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025
Protection Orders Issued	203	445	445	560

LAW LIBRARY

- Under RCW 27.24.010, every county with a population of 8,000 or more is legally required to establish and maintain a law library.
- Under RCW 27.24.066, the county legislative authority must provide room suitable for the law library.
- Funding: Law Libraries are primarily funded through Superior and District court filing fees.

LAW LIBRARY REVENUE 2025

Revenue Source	Amount
ITA Grant Reimbursement	\$11,442.36
District Court Filings	\$24,662.26
Sup Ct Clerks Filings	\$51,279.33
Public/Inmate Copy Fees	\$1,948.35
Total	\$89,332.30

LAW LIBRARY

- Mission:

"The Law Library serves the citizens and legal community of Whatcom County. Our mission is to provide access to current legal research materials and referral to other resources."

- Services:

- Legal research materials
- Computers and printer for research and filing preparation
- Access to Superior Court Odyssey Portal
- Reference and research assistance from Law Librarian
 - Assists the public, local attorneys, and responds to inmate kite requests

LAW LIBRARY

Law Library Usage/Reference Statistics							2025
Month	Days	Hrs open	No. attys	No.non-attys	Inmates	Odyssey	Monthly Total
January	10	67	5	29	35	33	102
February	12	76	7	26	37	21	91
March	12	80.75	12	37	43	47	139
April	13	86.5	9	46	31	48	134
May	17	101	10	45	35	51	141
June	13	48	4	34	41	25	104
July	17	68	3	54	46	40	143
August	12	48	1	24	43	26	94
September	13	52	4	30	55	35	124
October	13	52	5	32	73	30	140
November	10	40	1	35	35	43	114
December	12	48	3	33	36	49	121
Totals:	<i>No.days</i>	<i>No.hours</i>	<i>No.attys</i>	<i>No.non-attys</i>	<i>No.inmates</i>	<i>No.odyssey</i>	<i>Yearly Total</i>
	154	767.25	64	425	510	448	1447
			5%	29%	35%	31%	

LAW LIBRARY

- Marissa Tavener has been the Interim Law Librarian since May 2025 and has recently submitted her resignation.
- Extern with Judge Jones helping this Summer
- Need to keep law library open to continue serving the County and its citizen
 - Equal access to justice
 - Vision for Self-Help Center

OFFICE OF ASSIGNED COUNSEL - SCREENINGS FOR PUBLIC DEFENSE

2023	2024	2025 2026	2026 (as of 6/12)
3593	3583	3534	1409

CONFLICT OFFICE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

County
Clerk

Lead
Attorney

Ryan
Swinburnson

Ashley
Bohnett

Valeria
Dimova

Tanya
Poole(Legal
Assistant)

Investigator
(Contracted)

CONFLICT OFFICE

- What is the conflict office?
- Who do they represent?
- What are the new caseload standards?
- How will they effect public defense?

IMPROVEMENTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- State Archives is live
- Security Screening completed in Summer 2025
- Protection Order Facilitator hired
- Fully Staffed Conflict Office
- Multi-lingual clerk's office
- Exhibit Software purchased and starting with implementation, training, and outreach.
- New space for water clerk's completed
- Water Adjudication Forums with Public Outreach

CHALLENGES

- Court Staffing
- Outreach
- Training
- Policies & Procedures Updates
- Space

ANY QUESTIONS?

