Provincial Court of British Columbia

Annual Report 2024/2025

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2025 years of transparency

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Message from the Chief Judge

This is the 25th annual report published by the Provincial Court of British Columbia. I am proud of the Court's long-standing commitment to openness and transparency. We were one of the first courts in Canada to share details about our operation with the public every year, and the data we provide has become more comprehensive over time. We receive positive feedback on the depth and breadth of the information we report on and our use of imaginative design to communicate it effectively.

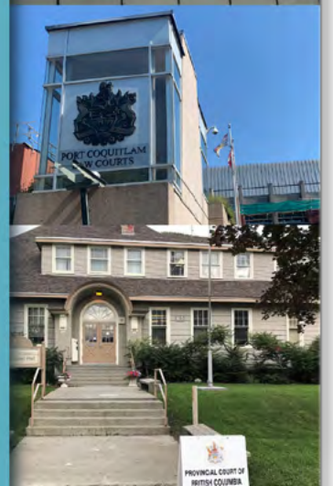
This year's report features photographs of courthouse doorways taken by judicial officers and staff around the province. They are a fitting symbol of the openness our annual reports reflect. They also represent the Court's openness to innovative ideas, illustrated in the report's descriptions of the progress we're making in our efforts to improve access to justice on several fronts.

We couldn't have made this progress without the openness and commitment of the Court's judicial officers and Integrated Judicial Services managers and staff. Their willingness to try new approaches and their perseverance in working through the challenges this brings have been vital to the progress we've made. I am grateful to all the judges, judicial justices, judicial case managers, and staff members who have served on committees, provided feedback, and contributed in other ways to the continuous improvement of our work.

The willingness of government representatives, legal organizations, and other stakeholders to work collaboratively with the Court to help us serve the public more effectively and efficiently has been another key factor in our progress. We value their contributions.

The Court's administrative team continues to surpass my expectations. Thank you to Associate Chief Judges Dohm and Wishart, Regional Administrative Judges Bowry, Koturbash, Milne, Rogers, and Struyk, CEO and Executive Director of Operations Ryan Mahar, the Court's Chief Legal Counsel Caroline Berkey and the legal team, and all Integrated Judicial Services managers and staff for your continuing support.

Melissa Gillespie
Chief Judge



25 years of transparency

This is the 25th annual report issued by the Provincial Court of British Columbia.

Our commitments

These reports are a tangible demonstration of the Court's enduring commitment to ensure that its administration and management are transparent, as well as fair, effective and efficient.

Our annual reports' sophistication, design and data have improved over the last quarter-century, but they have always embodied the belief that the public has a right to know how the Court is functioning.

The Court's judges, judicial justices and staff members demonstrate their commitment to these goals by contributing written summaries, data analysis, and photographs, making our reports the effort of a very large team!

The Court's other commitments are set out in its mission, vision, core values, and goals.

The Court's work

We deal with the majority of cases in BC

The Court's judges and judicial justices work in nearly 90 locations around the province. They deal with many issues that are important to British Columbians, including:

- Over 95% of criminal cases in BC - Provincial Court judges conduct bail hearings, preliminary inquiries, pretrial conferences, trials, and sentencing hearings, except for adults charged with murder and a few rare offences such as treason and piracy. Judicial justices also conduct bail hearings.
- Family court trials and mediation conferences about parenting arrangements, guardianship, support, and child protection matters.
- Small claims trials and settlement conferences in civil cases involving from $5,001 to $35,000, with some exceptions.
- Youth court cases involving young persons aged 12 through 17 charged with criminal offences.
- Traffic and bylaw offences trials - Judicial justices hear these, as well as tickets issued for other provincial and municipal offences and federal contravention tickets.

One of two trial courts in the province, the Provincial Court is a statutory court created by the *Provincial Court Act*. The BC government appoints judges and judicial justices to the Court from among lawyers recommended by the Judicial Council of British Columbia, and they exercise powers given to them in laws passed by the federal and provincial governments.

Vernon Courthouse
Photo: Judicial Justice Burgess

Ensuring impartiality

Canadian judges resolve disputes and enforce laws. To do that fairly for everyone, they must be impartial. They must be free to decide cases based on the evidence and the law, without outside influence or interference. This is the concept known as judicial independence.

An independent judiciary protects the public. Today it is increasingly important to understand judicial independence and the Rule of Law. They are cornerstones of democracy.

Judicial independence is important for everyone

Judicial independence means a judge is free to decide your case on its own merits, without anyone interfering. It means that when a judge makes a decision they are not influenced by popular opinion, political wishes, or the goals of a particular group. It means that someone cannot influence or dictate a judge's decision in a way that is unfair to you.

Judges are accountable

Judges are required to explain the decisions they make with reasons, everything said in a trial is recorded, and court proceedings are open to the public and the media, except in rare cases. Judges' decisions may be appealed to a higher level of court and reversed if the judge made a mistake. People can file a complaint if they are concerned about judicial misconduct.

> **An independent judiciary protects the public.**

Learning the facts

Threats to judicial independence can take many forms, including political interference, false or misleading news reports on court decisions, and personal attacks on judges. That doesn't mean people shouldn't debate and discuss court decisions, or that you cannot criticize a decision. In fact, this discussion and debate is an important part of a healthy democracy. But it's important to know the facts and law behind a decision.

After they make a decision, judges cannot respond to questions or criticism of it. This ensures that decisions given in court are final. To learn the facts and the law a judge had to apply, you can read published court decisions online. Some media reports include a link to the judge's reasons, or you can search for it on the Court's website or on CanLII. Courthouses are open to the public, so you can also sit in a courtroom and watch trials, except in a few very rare cases.

> **...discussion and debate are an important part of a healthy democracy. But it is important to know the facts and the law behind a decision.**

Protecting judicial independence

In a democracy like Canada, we protect judicial independence in three main ways:

- Appointment - Judges are appointed after a thorough consultation process and cannot be removed arbitrarily. This means a judge cannot be forced to decide a certain way to keep their job.
- Salaries and benefits – An independent body called the Judicial Compensation Committee makes recommendations for BC Provincial Court judges' salaries and benefits. This means judges do not negotiate their salaries with the government behind closed doors and cannot be promised raises if they decide a certain way.
- Management - Courts manage themselves independently of others. This means judges cannot be influenced by promises or threats about their court's administration.

Judicial Independence

Increasing access to justice

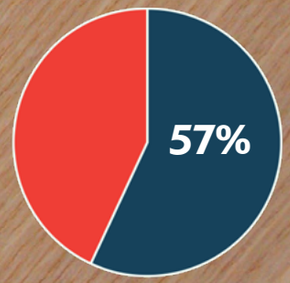
Initiatives designed to improve access to justice including family court initiatives, use of technology, and a new court website, continued to move forward in 2024/25.

Helping families sooner

The Early Resolution Process (ERP) is designed to help families with issues like parenting arrangements, guardianship, contact, and support. It provides early information, needs assessment including screening for family violence, referrals to address both legal and non-legal needs, a parenting education program, and when appropriate, at least one consensual dispute resolution session before they file a court application.

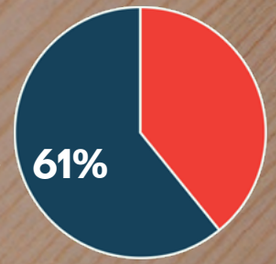
Published in March 2025, the final evaluation of ERP in Surrey was consistent with earlier evaluation in Victoria. Both show that providing information and resources early in family disputes can help families resolve them out of court. Children and families benefit from avoiding the stress and other burdens of litigation, and judicial resources can be used to address other caseload pressures.

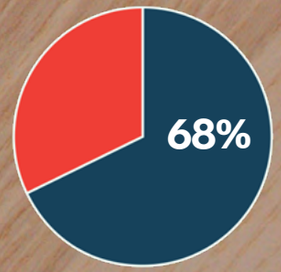
Final Report: Evaluation of the Early Resolution Process in the Surrey Registry



of families resolved their issues without filing a court application

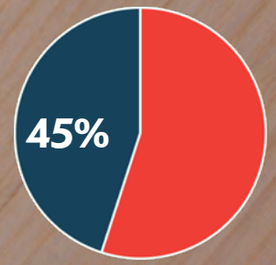
new family law cases in Surrey decreased by





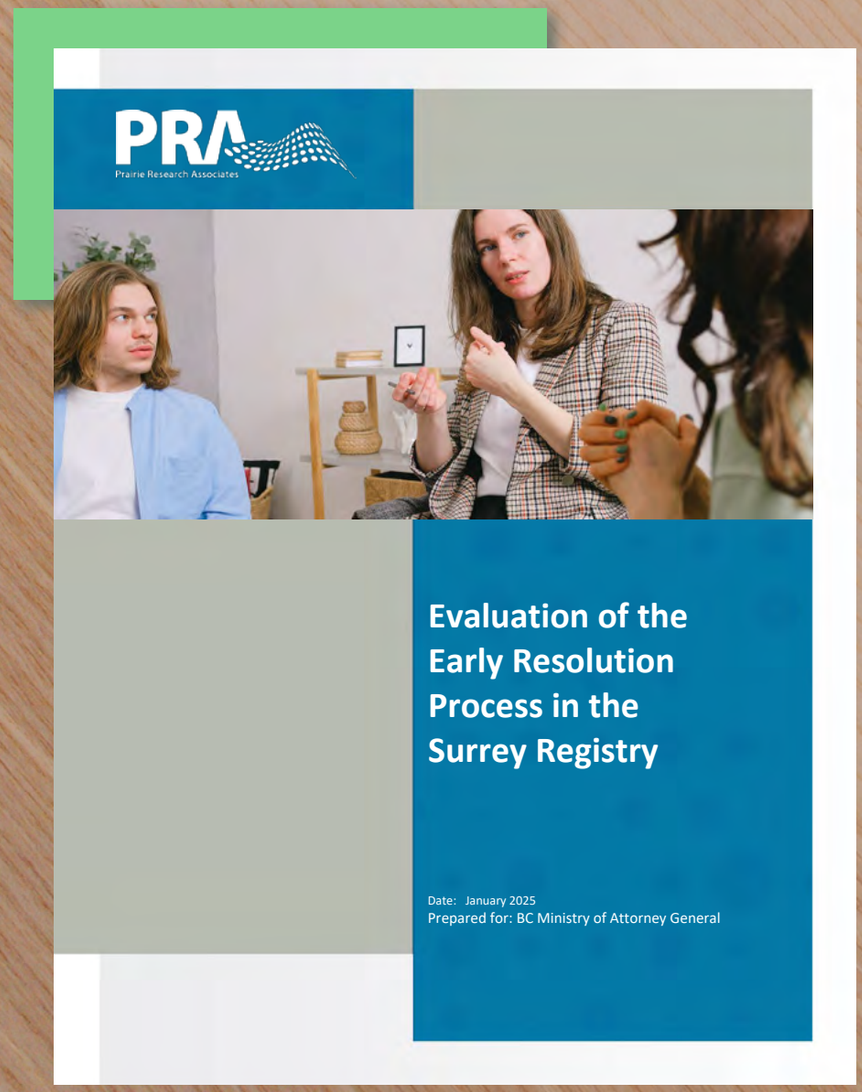
of families participating in CDR resolved some or all their legal issues

court time needed decreased by



The evidence-based design of new Provincial Court Family Rules incorporating ERP won a 2024 Premier's Award. The Ministry of Attorney General developed the Rules in partnership with the Court, with input from representatives of the Law Society, Canadian Bar Association, Legal Aid, and an organization helping self-represented litigants.

The Court also collaborated with the Ministry's Justice Services Branch and stakeholders, using human-centred design to develop new forms that are shorter, clearer and easier to navigate. They have been available online and at court registries since August 2024. A free online service helps litigants complete, save, file, and print the forms.



Adapting for the future

The pandemic sped up the Court's use of technology, but the changes made then were designed to create lasting improvements in the way the Court responds to users' needs. We continued to finetune these improvements in 2024/25.

Since 2020, the Court has expanded centralized virtual bail hearings province-wide and used virtual conferences to resolve family, small claims, and some criminal matters sooner. Attending conferences remotely saves litigants the time and expense of travelling to court and limits their time away from work. It can also reduce legal fees.

A judge in one court location may conduct bail hearings and conferences remotely for several other locations, enabling judges in those locations to conduct trials without interruption. This has helped to reduce wait times for trials in many smaller communities. Virtual bail hearings also increase accused persons' access to a lawyer, provide earlier hearings, and reduce travel for everyone involved.

As the Court moves away from a paper-based system, the Court Services branch of government has digitized court files. People are encouraged to e-file or email documents, and paper documents are scanned, creating electronic court files that can be accessed digitally. Convenient for lawyers and litigants, this also enables media and lawyers to access some documents instantly from their offices or homes.

> "People no longer have to go to the court registry to file a document or request a physical file. Just five years ago, that was the only option. In some parts of BC, it took several hours."
>
> Associate Chief Judge Wishart

Judges too can access court files from their computers, no matter where they are. Provincial Court judges may work in several court locations during a week, and this helps them prepare for court in advance. Being able to access digital court files also makes it simpler for judges to hear cases from other court locations.

Digitized files have also increased the Court's resilience. If there is a fire or flood, the Court can deal with affected cases in other court locations using digital records and remote appearances.

In another use of technology, people can apply by secure email for some procedural orders ("desk orders") without going to court for a hearing. A judge considers the emailed application, and the decision is emailed to the parties.

Dawson Creek Courthouse
Photo: Judge Thomas

Communicating at the next level

The Court's award-winning website has long been one of the most viewed justice-related sites in BC. In 2023, it had 1,231,309 page views, 418,493 users, and 171,928 page views of its eNews articles. But its operating system was reaching the end of its life and it didn't meet current accessibility standards. In October 2024 we launched a new user-centered site, designed to be welcoming, reliable, easy to navigate, and to offer helpful information in various media.

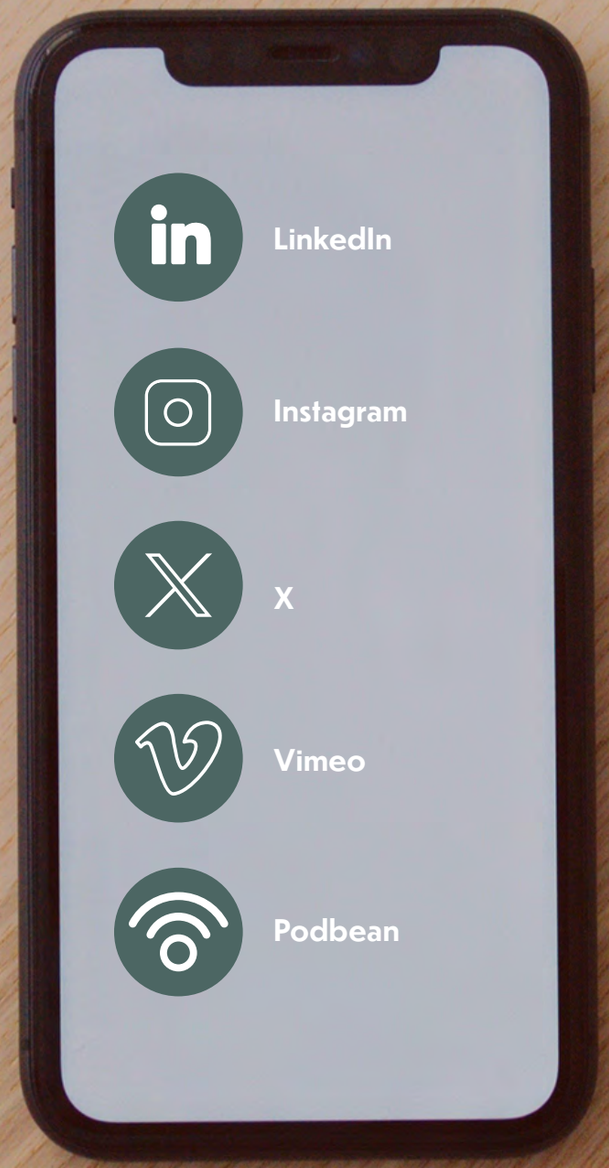
The new site puts the needs of litigants, especially self-represented litigants, first. It meets accessibility standards, has a quick-exit button, more images and videos, and is mobile-friendly. It uses plain language and pop-up explanations for legal terms that can't be avoided. There's still a media page with the Court's popular downloadable stock photos, and we still provide access to the Court's judgments, including a list of recent judgments.

See the new site at provincialcourt.bc.ca.

January 2025 was the 10th anniversary of the Court's ground-breaking eNews blog. These short, informal articles posted on the Court's website and emailed to subscribers were a new step for a Canadian court. Their purpose was to share information about the Court's work, judicial officers' activities, and the justice system that people weren't learning anywhere else. And the fresh content kept the Court's website active and interesting.

In the last decade the Court has published about 350 eNews articles. Their varied topics included judges on horseback and driving a Zamboni, accounts of circuit court travels to remote communities, and explanations of court traditions and procedures. In 2019, eNews received a Canadian Law Blogs award for "Best Blogs and Commentary."

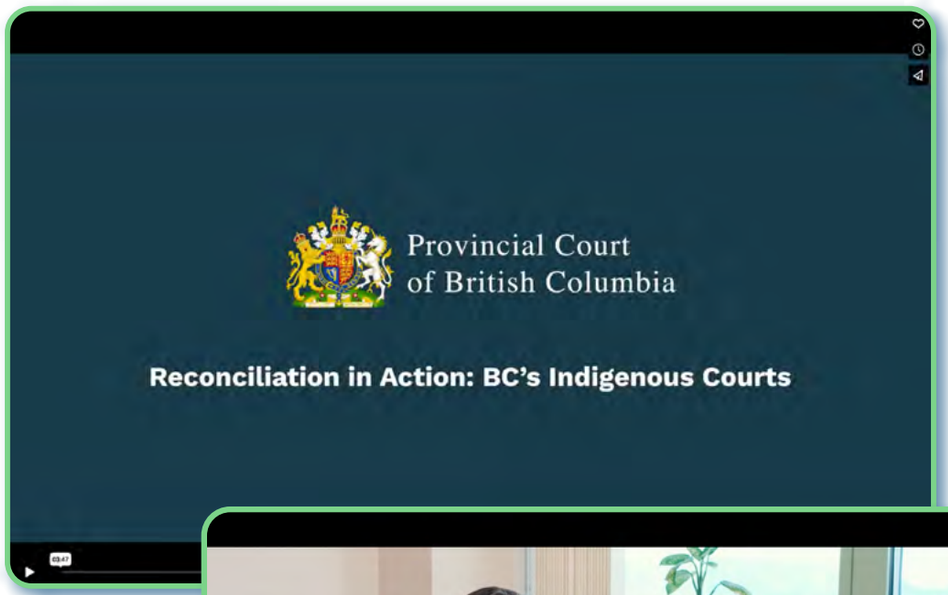
Subscribe to eNews



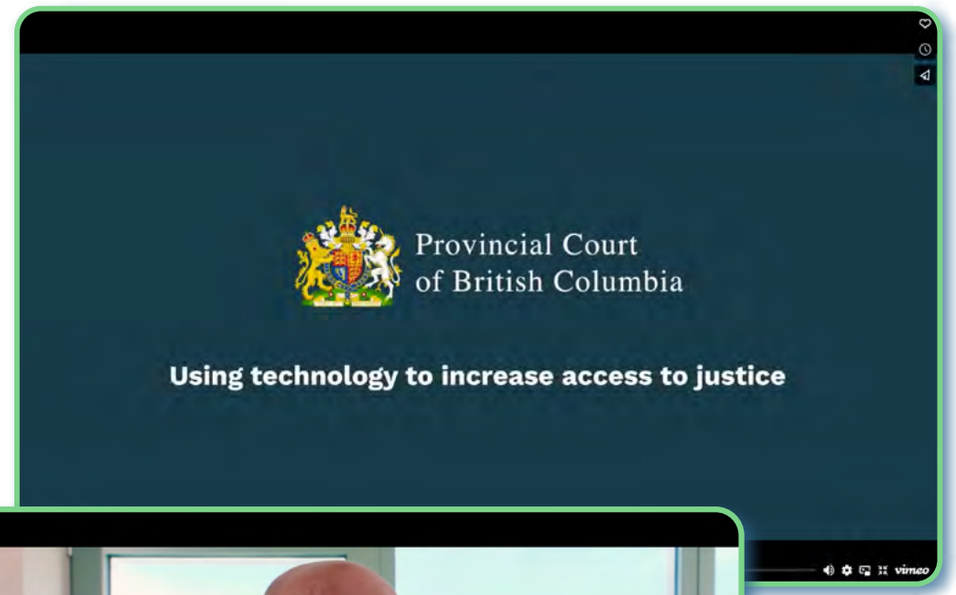
> We have worked hard to improve access to justice by using technology. It helps us make the most effective use of judges' time while reducing the barriers people experience when they have to come to court in person.
>
> Technology itself can also be a barrier. That's why we try to create pathways to meet people where they are and ensure that they have access whether they have computers, telephones, or need to come in person.
>
> Chief Judge Melissa Gillespie

Building on the multi-media, "something for everyone" online presence recognized in a 2022 Canadian Law Blogs award, the Court produced a three-part sequel to its 50th anniversary video. Three new, short videos highlight some of the ways the Court has improved access to justice since 2019.

Watch the video



Watch the video



Watch the video

By the Numbers

As of March 31, 2025:

Judges

134 full-time judges

61 judges' average age

3 judges retired

19 senior judges

10 judges were appointed in 2024/25

4 appointed to BC Supreme Court

51% of active judges were women (active judges include full-time and senior but not judges on LTD)

3 became senior judges

Justices

4 full time + **28** part-time judicial justices hearing traffic, ticket, and bylaw trials and bail and search warrant applications

36% of judicial justices were men

66 judicial justices' average age

2 part-time justice of the peace adjudicators hearing simplified civil trials in Vancouver and Richmond

54 full, part-time and auxiliary judicial case managers scheduling trials and presiding in Initial Appearance and Assignment Courts

Caseload

142,555 total new cases in 2024/25:

84,550
new criminal, family, & civil matters

58,005
new traffic, ticket, & bylaw offences

New caseload breakdown:

51%
criminal cases

38%
family cases

10%
small claims cases

The Justice Centre considered

31,701
applications for warrants and production orders and conducted

21,782
bail hearings

Remote appearances

66% of all court appearances, excluding traffic and bylaw matters, were made remotely

Self-represented appearances

58,181
self-represented appearances

Self-represented litigants made:

- **6%** of all appearances in criminal matters
- **39%** of all appearances in family matters
- **69%** of all appearances in small claims matters

Administering the Court

The Provincial Court consists of its judges and judicial justices, whose work outside the courtroom is supported by employees carrying out administrative duties. The Chief Judge is responsible for the Court's administration. Integrated Judicial Services is the collective name for the Court's employees including judicial case managers and senior judicial administrative assistants working in courthouses around BC as well as employees at the Office of the Chief Judge (OCJ) located in the Robson Square Courthouse in downtown Vancouver.

The BC government is responsible for maintaining courthouses and court records. Sheriffs, court clerks, and other staff working in courthouses are BC government employees.

Office of the Chief Judge

The OCJ is the administrative headquarters of the Court. Under the Chief Judge's direction, the OCJ provides administrative support to the Chief Judge and judicial officers and handles the Court's communications.

The Court's Associate Chief Judges, Regional Administrative Judges, Administrative Judicial Justices, and Executive Director of Operations contribute to the Court's administrative work as members of one or more of four committees: the Governance, Judicial Administration, Judicial Justice Administration, and Executive Operations Committees.

Office of the Chief Judge
Photo: Rebecca Jensen

Judicial Administration Committee, 2024/25:

Front row: Executive Director Ryan Mahar, Chief Judge Melissa Gillespie, Regional Administrative Judge Rita Bowry, Regional Administrative Judge Gregory Koturbash, Associate Chief Judge Paul Dohm

Back Row: Manager of Strategic Operations Rebecca Jensen (secretariat), Chief Legal Counsel Caroline Berkey, Regional Administrative Judge John Milne, Regional Administrative Judge Calvin Struyk, Regional Administrative Judge Carmen Rogers, Associate Chief Judge Sue Wishart

Law committees

Three law committees provide invaluable advice and support in the areas of law affecting the Court's work. On each committee about eight judges from around BC volunteer their time to advise the Chief Judge on relevant issues, contribute to judicial education, answer judges' questions, and create resources to help judges, lawyers, and court users.

In 2024/25, the Criminal Law Committee presented another four-day Criminal Law Bootcamp for new judges as well as a criminal law update at the Court's fall education conference. They continued to finetune lists of common orders made in youth court (YCJA picklists). Committee members were also frequent presenters at law schools and legal conferences.

The Family Law Committee offers advice on family law, procedures, and related innovation. This year committee members tested the use of AI in family support calculation software. Their ongoing tasks include updating picklists of standard terms of family law orders, updating training material and presenting a three-day Family Law Boot Camp for new judges, circulating a newsletter for judges with tips on family law and practice, and answering questions judges posed. Committee members also served as faculty in mediation training for new judges.

The Civil Law Committee provided updates to judges on substantive and procedural law. Its major project this year was preparing for the Court's 2025 spring education conference, which will focus entirely on judges' work in small claims court.

Provincial Court governance and committees

> **Judges and judicial justices volunteer to serve on committees that contribute to the Court's administration, education, innovative reforms and collaboration with stakeholders.**

Regional roundup

Interior region

One of the Court's largest regions, the Interior region covers 150,000 square kilometres of central and southern BC and is known for its strikingly diverse landscapes and climates. Judges frequently travel long distances between 21 court locations, navigating mountain passes, ferry routes, and tourist-filled highways, often in challenging weather conditions.

Situated in the rain shadow of the Coast Mountains, the region features everything from arid deserts and grasslands to forested mountains and fertile valleys. It is home to some of Canada's hottest and driest areas and regularly faces environmental challenges such as wildfires, floods, and landslides, all of which can affect court operations.

The region boasts a varied and rich Indigenous heritage. It is home to three of the Court's Indigenous courts in Kamloops, Merritt, and Lillooet and to the Kelowna Integrated Court, all offering culturally informed and community-based approaches to justice.

Interior judges are actively engaged with Thompson Rivers University (TRU) Law School in Kamloops, frequently serving as faculty, moot court judges, and guest speakers. A highlight this year was the second annual Bail Moot Competition, bringing together over 100 students with judges in five courtrooms for a practical and engaging learning experience.

An Interior judge also hosts the Canadian Bar Association Women Lawyers' First Year Potluck, an annual tradition. Drawing over 70 attendees this year, the event featured "Ask Me Anything" breakout groups with judges and lawyers, fostering mentorship and open dialogue in a relaxed setting.

Snowfall this heavy impacts travel to Interior region courts.

For the first time since the original Revelstoke Courthouse opened in 1897, the entire Interior judiciary hosted a meeting there with local lawyers. The event encouraged connection, collaboration, and a renewed sense of community between the bench and the bar. Interior judges' other contributions to professional development include involvement in the Inns of Court in Kamloops and Kelowna and the Judges and Juniors Programs in the South Okanagan and Kootenay regions.

Judges also spoke regularly to elementary and secondary school students. They participate in all these activities on their own time, as volunteers, demonstrating their unflagging commitment to legal education, mentorship, and fostering strong ties with the legal and wider communities.

Rossland Courthouse
Photo: Gary Linn

Revelstoke Courthouse
Photo: Judicial Justice Burgess

Judges and justices

Chief Judge

The Honourable Melissa Gillespie is the Court's Chief Judge. She is the Court's official spokesperson and is responsible for its administration. Her responsibilities include leading the Court's judicial officers, administering the budget, facilitating continuing education for all judicial officers, acting as presiding member of the Judicial Council of British Columbia, and speaking frequently at programs for the public, lawyers, and judges. Chief Judge Gillespie also hears cases in court locations around the province.

Associate Chief Judges

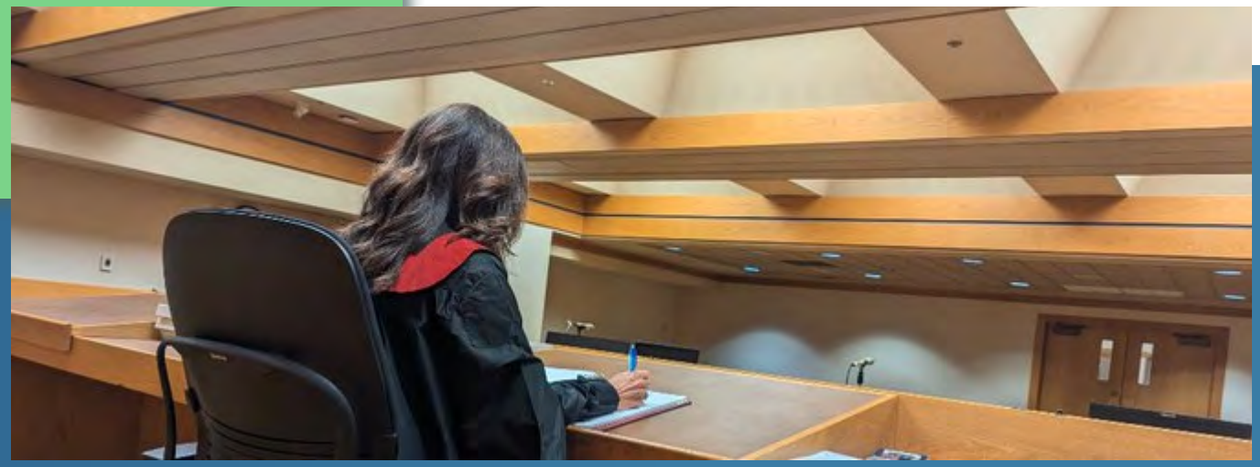
The Honourable Sue Wishart and the Honourable Paul Dohm are the Court's Associate Chief Judges. Associate Chief Judge Dohm's responsibilities include the judicial justice division, regional operations, scheduling, criminal law reform, and the Justice Centre. Associate Chief Judge Wishart's administrative responsibilities include technology, specialized courts, family and civil law reform, and business intelligence and continuity. They also sit in court.

Regional Administrative Judges

Regional Administrative judges are responsible for administration in each of the Court's five judicial regions. In 2024/25 they were:

- the Honourable Carmen Rogers (Vancouver Island)
- the Honourable John Milne (Vancouver)
- the Honourable Rita Bowry (Fraser)
- the Honourable Gregory Koturbash (Interior)
- the Honourable Calvin Struyk (Northern)

Unsung heroes: The Court's Regional Administrative Judges



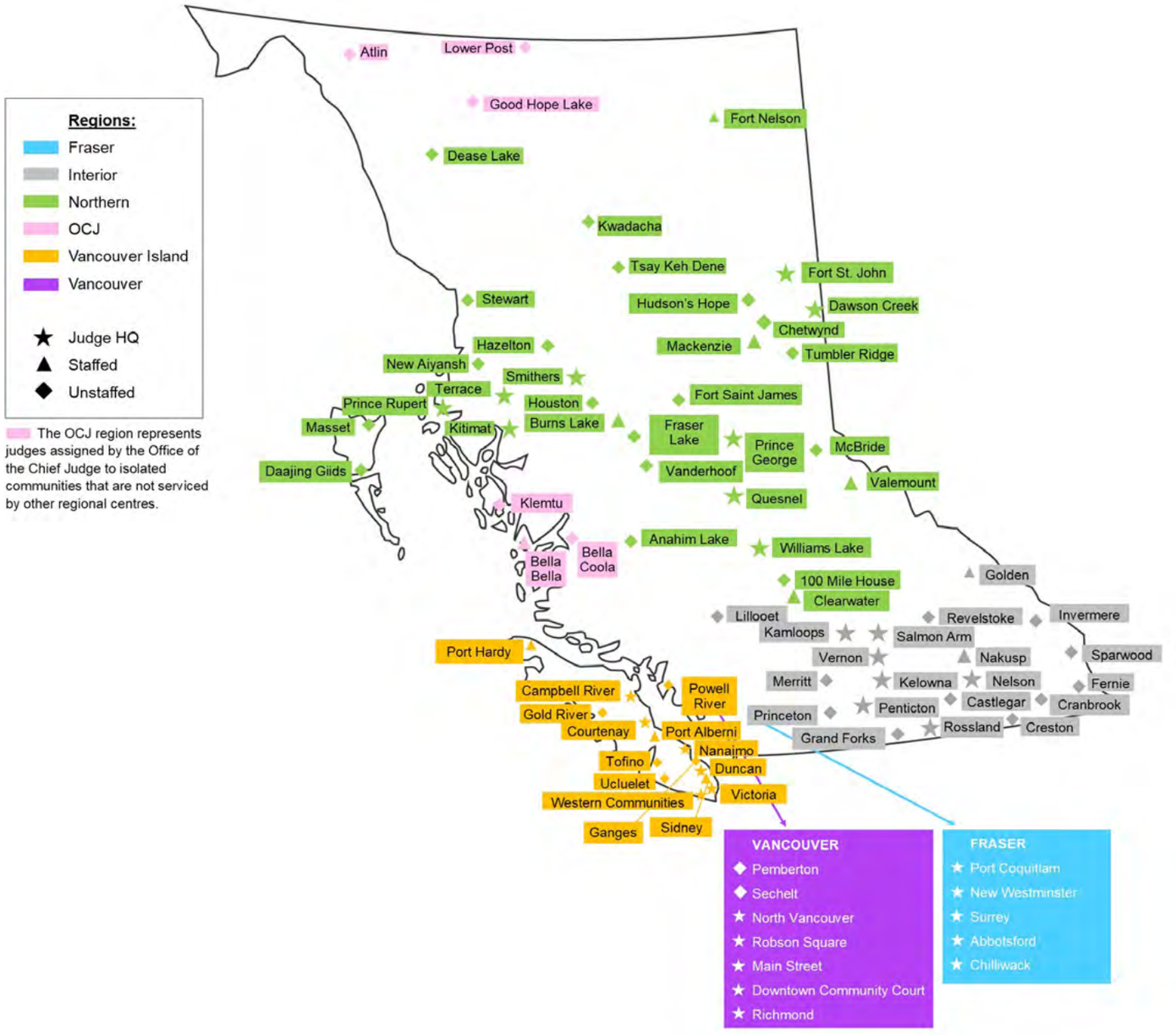
Judges

Provincial Court judges conduct trials and other proceedings in criminal, youth, family, and civil matters in almost 90 court locations in British Columbia. They also perform judicial mediation in family and civil settlement conferences. When not presiding in court they research and write reserved decisions, keep current by reading the law, and consider complex applications for judicial authorizations. They also volunteer their time for court committees, speaking engagements, and other activities contributing to the justice system.

The Lieutenant Governor in Council (the BC Cabinet) appoints Provincial Court judges on the recommendation of the Judicial Council of BC. Like judges of the BC Supreme Court and BC Court of Appeal, BC Provincial Court judges must have practised law in Canada for at least ten years before being appointed. Most have considerably more legal experience.

The Judicial Council's annual reports provide details of the appointment process, applicants' demographics, and analysis of application trends, while the Court's annual reports include details of judicial appointments and demographics.

Judicial Council Annual Reports



When appointed, each judge is assigned to a region, with an office (called "chambers") in one courthouse. Most judges travel regularly to work in other court locations in their region, and sometimes to other regions. They also conduct some proceedings remotely, sitting in one courthouse but dealing with cases from other court locations.

Most Provincial Court judges work full-time. However, judges aged 55 or older with at least ten years of service may choose to hold office as a part-time "senior judge".

Current list of judges

Administrative Judicial Justices

Administrative Judicial Justice Lori Plater is responsible for the Court's Traffic Division, which conducts hearings of traffic, by-law, cannabis, and other tickets, as well as small claims payment hearings. Administrative Judicial Justice Gerry Hayes is responsible for criminal matters at the Justice Centre.

Judicial Justices

Judicial justices are judicial officers exercising authority under various federal and provincial laws. The Chief Judge has assigned them duties including presiding in traffic and bylaw courts and small claims payment hearings, conducting bail hearings, and considering search warrant applications at the Justice Centre.

Today's judicial justices are almost all legally trained judicial officers who conduct both in-person and virtual proceedings around the province. Their work includes managing busy courtrooms with cases involving challenging legal issues and self represented litigants. This requires first-class organizational and people skills and technological proficiency in addition to legal knowledge.

Judicial justices must have practised law for at least five years before being appointed, but many have done so much longer. Of the last five judicial justices appointed, four had spent more than thirty years practising law. The fifth had sixteen years' legal practice experience. One had a Master's degree and another had been appointed King's Counsel.

Current list of judicial justices

Today's judicial justices may surprise you!

Robson Square Courthouse
Photo: Rebecca Jensen

Justice of the Peace Adjudicators

The Court has two justice of the peace adjudicators. They are senior lawyers appointed on a part-time basis to hear civil cases involving from $5,001 to $10,000 in the Robson Square and Richmond courthouses. Early in 2025, the Judicial Council of BC issued a call inviting qualified lawyers to apply for appointment to do this interesting work.

Judicial Case Managers

Judicial case managers (JCMs) are justices of the peace who exercise judicial discretion and authority within the duties assigned to them by the Chief Judge. As of March 31, 2025, there were 38 full-time, eight part-time, and eight auxiliary judicial case managers.

They work remotely and in-person in courthouses to skilfully manage the flow of Provincial Court appearances and schedule trials and hearings to minimize delays and facilitate access to justice. They also manage the scheduling of virtual bail courts around the province.

Judicial case managers preside virtually in Initial Appearance Courts, often conducting "hybrid" proceedings in which they and lawyers sometimes appear remotely while some litigants appear in person. In BC's seven busiest courthouses, they also preside in Assignment Courts, triaging trials to ensure they are ready to proceed before assigning them to trial courts. Judicial case managers work closely with stakeholders and are an important source of information about Court operations for litigants, lawyers, sheriffs, and court staff.

Fernie Courthouse
Original painting by Judge Koturbash

Judicial complement

Judges

Judicial complement refers to the number of judicial full-time equivalents (JFTEs[1]) available to the Provincial Court. This is distinct from the number of judges, as some work part-time in the Senior Judges' Program.[2]

As of March 31, 2025, there were 134 full-time judges (FT) and 19 senior judges. This equates to a complement of 142.55.

During the 2024/25 fiscal year:

- 10 judges were appointed
- 3 judges retired
- 4 judges were appointed to the BC Supreme Court
- 3 judges elected to participate in the Senior Judges' Program[3]

Changes to the Provincial Court's complement are reported monthly in a Judicial Complement Report on the Court's website.

Figure 1 - Judges Appointed in 2024/25

Judge	Judicial Region	Date
Judge Thompson	Northern	April 15, 2024
Judge Klein	Interior	April 29, 2024
Judge Nijjar	Fraser	July 25, 2024
Judge Pearson	Vancouver Island	July 25, 2024
Judge Fortino	Fraser	September 27, 2024
Judge Libby	Fraser	September 27, 2024
Judge Henry	Fraser	March 21, 2025
Judge Dybwad	Vancouver Island	March 21, 2025
Judge Ward	Vancouver	March 28, 2025
Judge de Guzman	Fraser	March 28, 2025

1. JFTE is calculated based on the number and status of Provincial Court judges. Full-time judges are counted as 1, senior judges are counted as 0.45, and any part-time judges are counted according to their sitting time as a proportion of a full-time judge. Complement numbers do not include judges on long term disability.
2. This program allows Judges 55 years or older with at least 10 years' service to continue sitting on a part time basis.
3. One judge is also counted as a retirement because they elected and retired in the same year.

Figure 2 - Judges Who Retired or Elected to Sit Part-Time as of March 31, 2025[4]

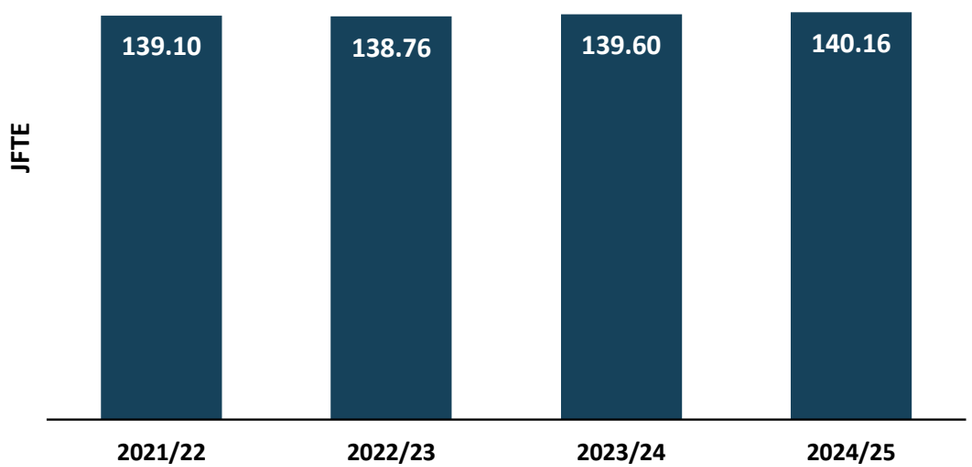
Judge	Judicial Region	Date	Reason[5]
Judge Frame	Interior	April 1, 2024	Senior Judge Election
Judge Young	Fraser	April 1, 2024	Senior Judge Election
Judge Rounthwaite	Fraser	April 30, 2024	Retirement (Senior Judge)
Judge Galati	Vancouver	July 1, 2024	Senior Judge Election
Judge Dion	Fraser	August 29, 2024	Appointed to the Supreme Court
Judge Ormiston	Fraser	August 29, 2024	Appointed to the Supreme Court
Judge Young	Fraser	September 30, 2024	Retirement (Senior Judge)
Judge MacCarthy	Vancouver Island	November 30, 2024	Retirement (Senior Judge)
Judge Bennett	Interior	March 3, 2025	Appointed to the Supreme Court
Judge Hewson	Interior	March 3, 2025	Appointed to the Supreme Court

4. One judge made a Senior Judge election and retired in the same year.

5. The last sitting day of a retiring senior judge is recorded as a retirement in this list.

The monthly Judicial Complement Reports represent a snapshot in time, and the timing of appointments or retirements can influence them. Average daily complement, calculated over the course of a year, is less likely to be affected in this way and can provide a more accurate gauge of complement over time. The average daily complement for 2024/25 was 140.16.

Figure 3 - Average Judicial Complement, 2021/22 – 2024/25

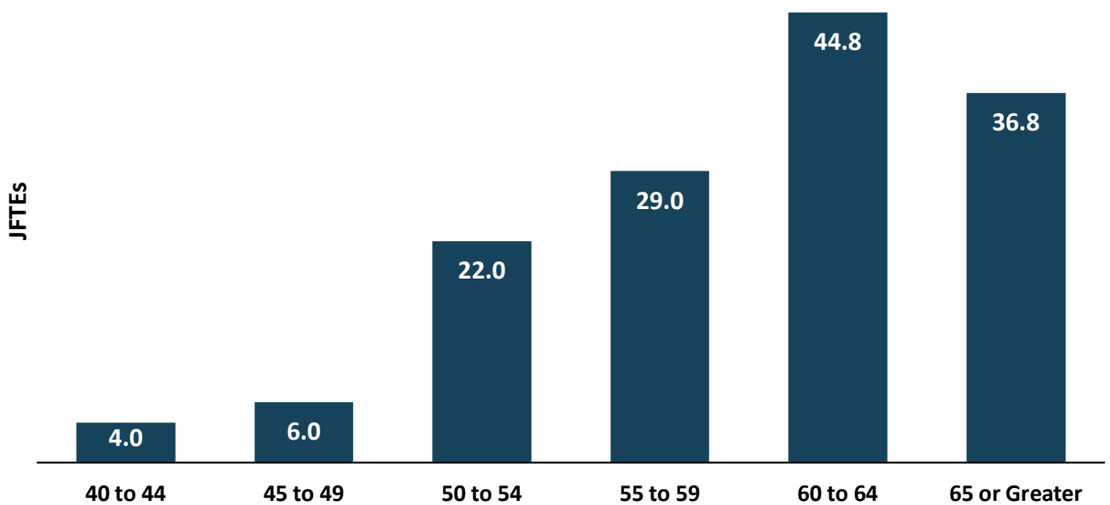


Judges' demographics

Age

As of March 31, 2025, most Provincial Court judges were between the ages of 50 and 64, with an overall average age of 61 years and the median age of 62 years – similar to the previous year. The average female Provincial Court judge was 60 years of age, while the average male judge was 61.4.

Figure 4 - JFTE[6] by Age Category, March 31, 2025



Gender

The Provincial Court's complement of judges is now very close to gender parity. The number of active[7] female judges is just slightly higher than that of active male judges.

Figure 5 - Percentage of Judges by Gender and Status[7] as of March 31, 2025

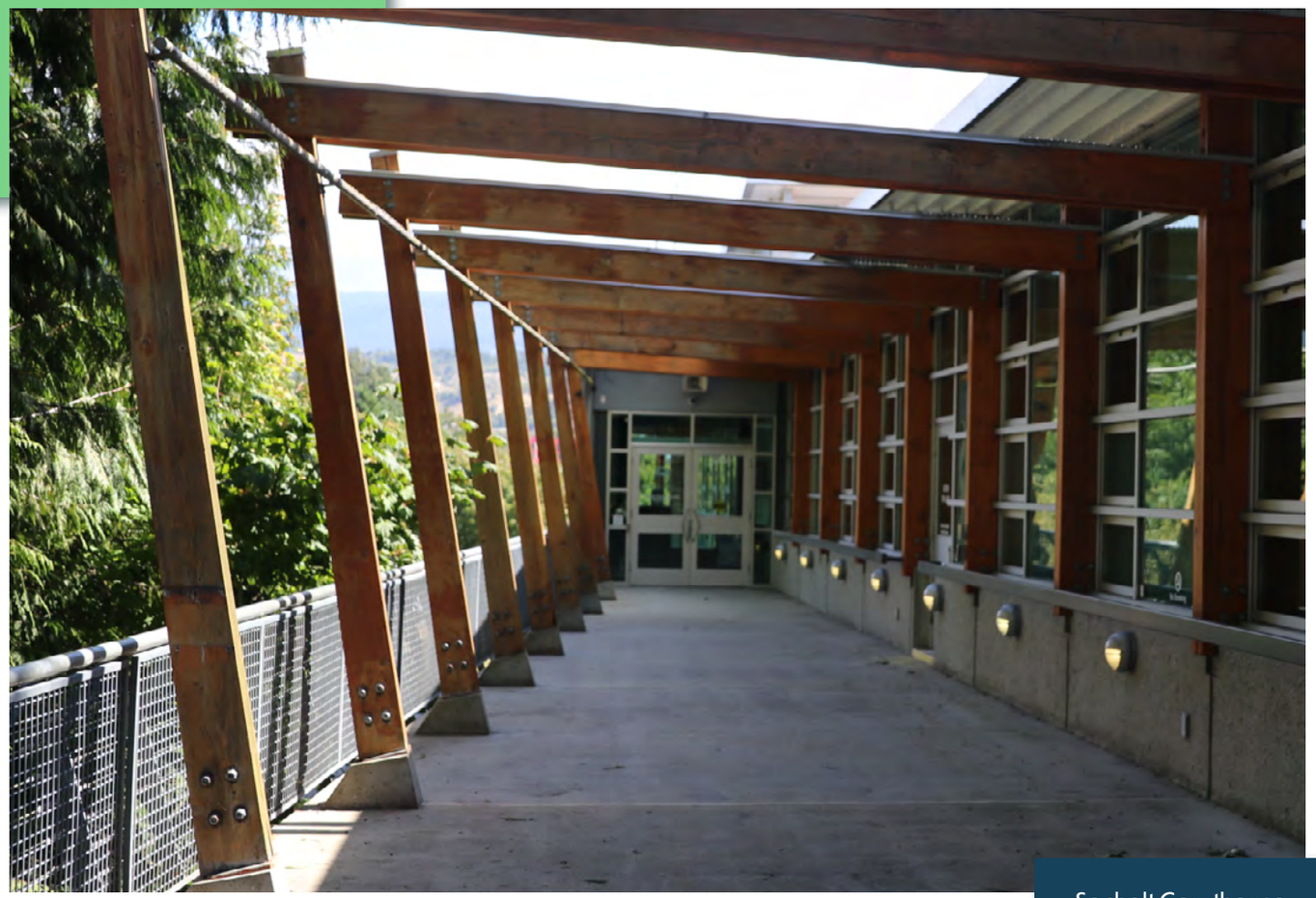
Gender	Full Time		Senior		JFTE	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female	68	51%	8	42%	71.6	51%
Male	66	49%	11	58%	70.95	49%

A greater proportion of active male judges currently sit as seniors (14% vs. 11% of active female judges).

6. JFTE can decline with age as more judges choose to participate in the Senior Judge Program (a senior judge is counted as 0.45 of a JFTE).

7. The term "active" excludes judges on long term disability.

The cultural and ethnic backgrounds volunteered by applicants for judicial appointment are outlined in the Judicial Council of BC's annual reports.



Sechelt Courthouse
Photo: Alvin Lau

Judicial Justices

As of March 31, 2025, the Court had 32 judicial justices including four full-time and 28 who work part-time. Three judicial justices retired in 2024/25 while one was appointed.

Figure 6 - Judicial Justices Changes in 2024/25

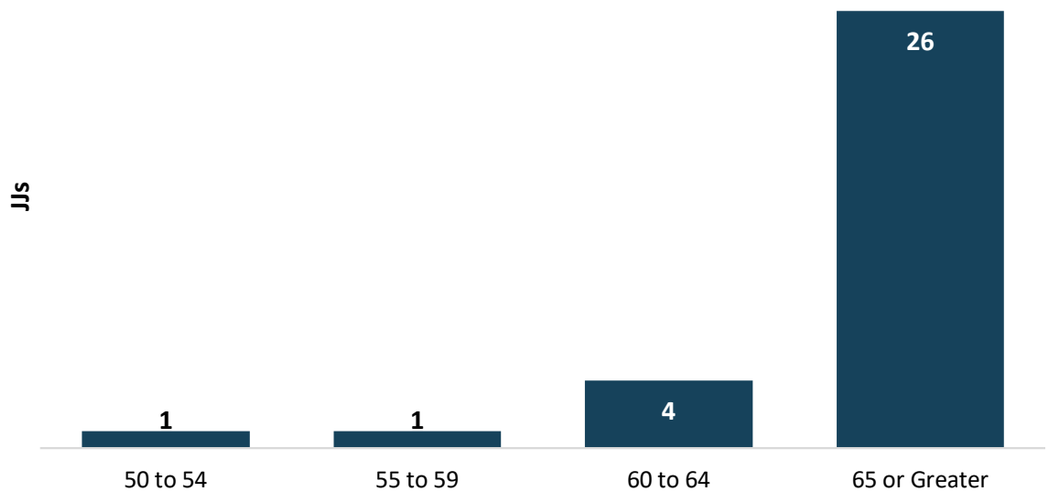
Judicial Justice	Reason	Date
Judicial Justice Stabler	Retirement	June 30, 2024
Judicial Justice Jevning	Appointment	July 26, 2024
Judicial Justice Rodgers	Retirement	March 31, 2025
Judicial Justice Holmes	Retirement	March 31, 2025

Judicial Justices' demographics

Age

As of March 31, 2025, the majority of Provincial Court judicial justices were over the age of 65, with an overall average age of 66 years and the median age of 67 years.

Figure 7 - Judicial Justices by Age Category as of March 31, 2025



Gender

Of the total complement of 32[8], 13 were male and 19 female.

Figure 8 - Gender Distribution of Judicial Justices as of March 31, 2025

Gender	Full Time		Part-Time	
	#	%	#	%
Female	1	25%	18	64%
Male	3	75%	10	36%

Rossland Courthouse
Original painting by Judge Koturbash

8. This does not include two judicial justices on LTD.

Continuous learning

To achieve the Court's core values of fairness and excellence, all judicial officers and staff must keep up with rapidly changing law, its social contexts, and developments in technology. The Court supports their continuous learning in many ways.

Judges' education

The Judges' Education Committee consists of judges from around the province who volunteer their time. Working year-round to present two annual conferences, the committee reports to the BC Judicial Council and the Provincial Court Judges Association for guidance and feedback. It receives essential administrative support from IJS staff members.

The 2024 spring conference focused on interpersonal violence in the context of criminal, family, and child protection proceedings. The current and former Chief Justices of the BC Court of Appeal spoke at the fall conference, in a program including updates on family and criminal law issues and on cases involving Indigenous people. Presenters also discussed how people deal with grief, depression, stress, and resiliency.

Working as a judge can be an isolating role, especially in small and remote communities. Meeting and learning together at in-person conferences like these enables judges to build relationships with colleagues that promote advice-seeking and knowledge-sharing.

In addition, the Court regularly provides small group training programs on sexual assault trials, judgment writing, criminal and family law boot camps, and lunch hour webinars on varied topics. New judges receive orientation and mentoring and the Court's IT team offers one-on-one training and how-to guides for the technology applications judges use.

Judicial education

Judges' Education Program
Photo: Christine Robb

Judicial Justices' education

Judicial justices also attend two in-person education conferences a year. Topics covered at the 2024 conferences included using plain language, creating clarity in oral judgments, Indigenous justice, Independent Investigations Office applications, and youth bail. Judicial justices also received ongoing IT training on new applications including Traffic Court Online and Telewarrant procedures. They adapted to developments in electronic and telephone applications and a more efficient procedure for virtual bail hearings.

The Judicial Justices' Education Committee also completed a Resources manual to support colleagues in their increasingly challenging work.

Judicial Justices' Education Program

IJS education

Integrated Judicial Services (IJS) is the collective of BC Public Service Agency employees who work for the Provincial Court. In 2024/25, IJS embraced a values-based leadership philosophy to further the Court's mission. A new IJS Leadership Team committee was formed to implement a "leadership-focused" management model.

IJS lawyers and other professionals attended courses needed to meet their professional development requirements. The Court also supported five IJS employees with career-related, post-secondary educational opportunities through Pacific Leaders Scholarships for Public Servants. Some IJS employees volunteered for temporary "stretch assignments" involving new responsibilities with additional supervisory support and mentorship.

Each year, IJS employees take BC Public Service Agency Learning Centre training on topics including standards of conduct, information management, access, security, privacy, and records management. Employees who approve expenses take mandatory training related to those duties.

Court-specific training included:

- a two-day annual education conference for judicial case managers
- a two-day biennial education conference and monthly webinars for judicial administrative assistants
- commencement of focused "Learning of the Month" as well as other virtual training and refresher sessions for all IJS employees

Law intern program

The Court collaborates with the University of British Columbia's Peter A. Allard School of Law in a Judicial Externship Program. It provides an opportunity for third-year students to spend a term working with Provincial Court judges for credit towards their law degree while the Court benefits from research assistance not otherwise available. In 2025, we hope to launch an internship program with the Thompson Rivers University Faculty of Law as well.

Law intern program

An Indigenous law student's perspective on a circuit court

Judicial Case Managers' Education Program
Photo: Christine Robb

Working towards reconciliation

Working with Indigenous Peoples to increase their access to justice is an important part of our reconciliation efforts. Provincial Court sittings in Indigenous communities and nine Indigenous sentencing courts incorporate aspects of Indigenous cultures and practices to improve outcomes for Indigenous people. Engaging with Indigenous groups, educating judicial officers and staff, and establishing a Reconciliation Committee are other ways the Court continues to work towards reconciliation.

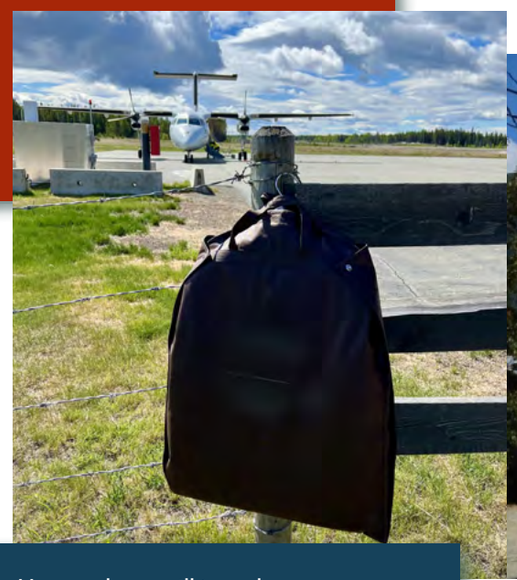
Holding court in Indigenous communities

In 2024, the Court accepted the invitation of the Ahousaht First Nation to sit on Flores Island off Vancouver Island's west coast. A judge and court team travelled by boat to hold court sittings there, saving litigants an expensive boat trip and permitting interested community members to attend court.

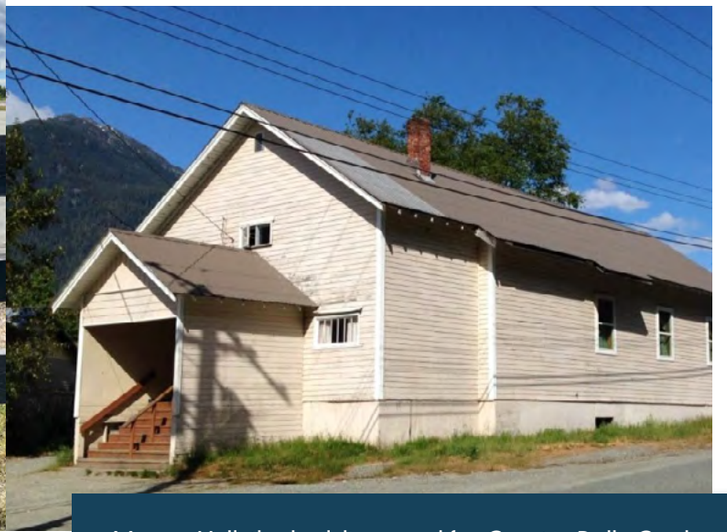
In response to an invitation from the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation, the Provincial Court's location on the west coast of Vancouver Island was moved from the town of Tofino to a conference centre the Nation had created from the gymnasium of a former residential school. Members of the Nation's Justice Committee have commented that the move has had a positive impact.

Circuit courts

For decades, BC Provincial Court judges have travelled with court teams to smaller communities that don't require a full-time court. There they hold court in community halls, recreation centres, and other facilities. Called "circuit courts" because the judge sometimes makes a circuit, holding court in several locations during a week, they often serve remote Indigenous communities. Learning from community members and justice workers about their history, customs, laws, and challenges, judges are able to incorporate restorative justice, reconciliation, and healing in their work.



Have robes, will travel.
Photo: Judge Cronin



Moose Hall, the building used for Court in Bella Coola
Photo: Judge Lucky

Indigenous sentencing courts

The BC Provincial Court's nine Indigenous sentencing courts incorporate aspects of Indigenous justice, culture, and healing practices in sentencing for criminal offences. The Court continues to discuss opening new Indigenous courts with interested communities.

The Kitasoo First Nation Big House

Indigenous child protection

In 2024, the Cowichan Tribes became the first Indigenous community in BC to assume authority over child and family services for its people. They passed their own laws and worked with government and the Court to develop applicable rules for child protection cases.

The Cowichan Tribes designated the BC Provincial Court's Duncan location as the court to be used when a court order is needed for a Cowichan family or child living on Vancouver Island or a Gulf Island. The process used is like that in other child protection cases, with some differences, including a requirement for a Sul-hween Harmony Restoring Advisory (an Elder) to attend a case conference.

Duncan Courthouse

Indigenous judges

As of March 31, 2025, the Court had seven judges who identify as Indigenous. They form an Indigenous Judges Council able to advise the Chief Judge on Indigenous issues.

Reconciliation Committee

The Court further strengthened its commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples by forming a Reconciliation Committee in 2024. Composed of Indigenous and non-Indigenous judges and staff members, the Committee undertook development of a Reconciliation Framework that will reflect the Court's unique challenges and opportunities to advance reconciliation. The Court hopes to publish the Framework in 2025.

First court sitting on Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation territory, September 9, 2024

Chief Judge Gillespie, Regional Administrative Judge Rogers, Judge Wolf and the court team met with members of the Ahousaht First Nation and community for a welcome lunch to celebrate the first court sitting in Maaqutusiis.

Reaching out

The Court's continuing outreach to Indigenous communities supports reconciliation. During the year, the Chief Judge and other judges met with Indigenous groups to discuss various issues and celebrate steps forward. These occasions included:

- Meetings with representatives of Indigenous communities and government in Port Hardy to discuss restorative justice
- Meeting with representatives of the Sto:Lo Nation to explore formation of an Indigenous court in S'ÓLH TÉMÉXW (Chilliwack)
- Participating in training for Elders in Indigenous courts
- Meeting with members of the Ahousaht Nation to celebrate the Court's first sitting in Maaqutusiis
- Meeting with First Nations and others in Terrace to explore formation of an Indigenous court
- Meeting with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations to discuss issues relating to Indigenous youth in the justice system
- Participating in the Indigenous Elders Justice Symposium

At the Indigenous Elders Justice Symposium in Vancouver in March 2025, BC's Chief Justice Leonard Marchand and Chief Judge Gillespie spoke, and Judges Bernt, Phillips, Thomas, and Whonnock formed a panel discussing emerging issues in Indigenous courts.

Shown here, Chief Justice Marchand, Kamloops Indigenous Court Elder Dr. Muriel Sasakamoose, and Judge Raymond Phillips.

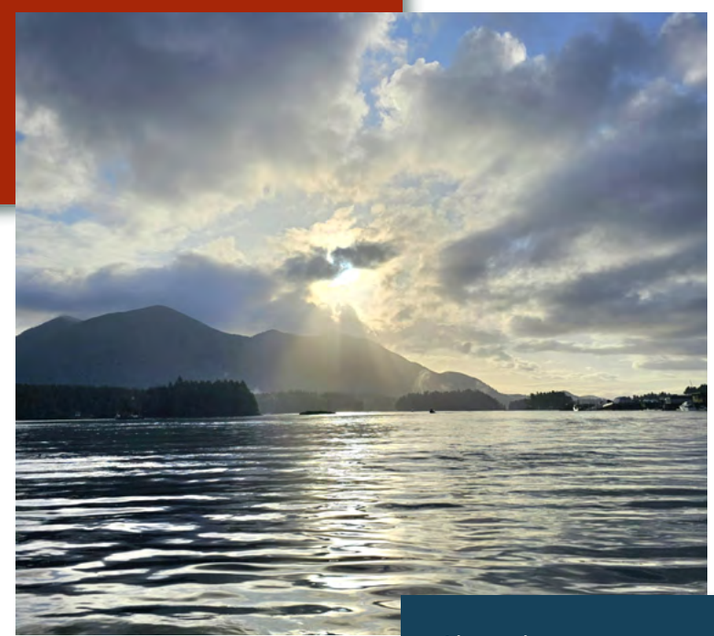
Learning

In 2024, the Court's education programs for judges, judicial justices, judicial case managers, and staff all included topics related to Indigenous justice and the history, cultures, and unique systemic factors experienced by BC's Indigenous peoples.

Reflecting

All Provincial Court locations were closed on September 30th, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation statutory holiday. The Court's judicial officers and staff had an opportunity to reflect on our shared commitment to advance reconciliation and consider our responsibilities under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

Judge Raymond Phillips and Kamloops Cknu'cwentn First Nations Court Elders



Ahousaht
Photo: Kathleen Burden

Regional roundup

Northern region

The Court's Northern region is distinguished by its weather, its geography, and its sparse population. It stretches from Haida Gwaii to the Alberta border and from the Yukon border to 100 Mile House, covering some 670,000 square kilometres, an area larger than Alberta.

Three Indigenous courts sit regularly in Prince George, Williams Lake, and Hazelton, and discussions about establishing Indigenous courts are underway with other communities. Continuing expansion of Indigenous courts is part of the Court's ongoing efforts towards understanding and reconciliation.

Improvements begun during and after the pandemic are having a positive impact in the region. Many locations continue to struggle with fewer of the community-based resources that improve access to justice for community members, but technology has helped people access legal services. The Court's use of technology, particularly in virtual bail hearings and family law cases, has also helped to improve Northerners' access to justice and to create efficiencies.

Northern courts were previously affected by sheriff staffing issues, but this year saw marked improvement with new sheriff recruits and more personnel.

Skeena River
Photo: Judge Stewart

Travel has always been a part of the Northern judge's experience. Changing demands have affected where and how frequently the Court sits in certain locations and virtual proceedings have reduced judicial travel overall. However, judges still travel extensively by road and air for in-person proceedings throughout the region. In winter months, with heavy snow and temperatures dipping into the - 40's, white knuckle driving and the risk of colliding with large animals are commonplace. "Fly in" circuits can also present challenges in bad weather.

Northern judges are actively involved in their communities. Their contributions include speaking to university, college, and school classes, judging mock trials, coaching sports, and serving on committees and boards. As just one example, a Northern judge is a member of the Board of the Law Foundation of BC.

Prince Rupert Courthouse
Photo: Marion Hornfelt

Burns Lake Courthouse
Photo: Rebecca Thompson

Connecting with communities

The Court engages with communities around BC and beyond.

Every year, the Court's innovative efforts to improve access to justice draw visitors from across Canada and around the world to meet with judges, learn about our approaches, and observe courts in session. In 2024/25, our visitors included delegations from Ecuador and the Malaysian State of Sarawak, as well as judges from the Supreme Court of Canada.

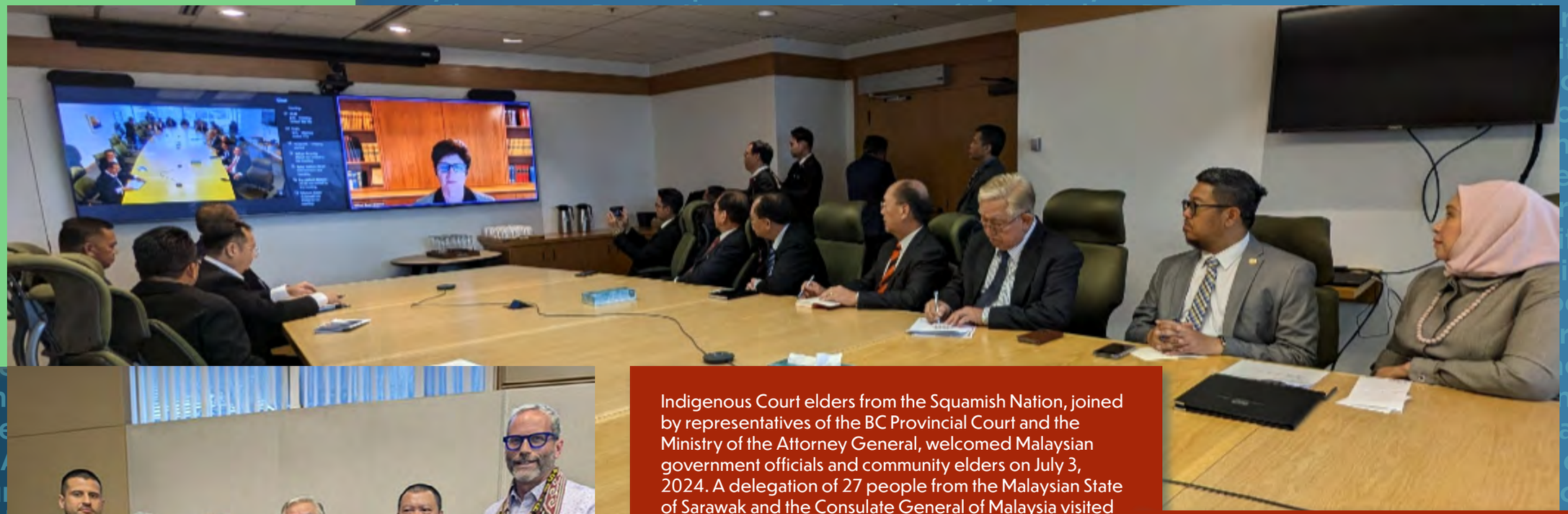
Provincial Court judges also contribute countless hours to volunteer activities within the Court, the legal profession, and their home communities each year. Their activities range from coaching and officiating youth sports through serving on boards of justice and community organizations, presiding at swearing-in ceremonies, and teaching at law schools. They include countless speaking engagements with audiences ranging from elementary school classes to national and international conferences.

Some of these audiences are listed in the background of upcoming pages.

2024 marked the 50th anniversary of the Criminal Law Clinic at UBC's Peter A. Allard Faculty of Law. Provincial Court Judge Jack McGivern began the clinical program in 1974. Trained and supervised by experienced criminal lawyers, law students earn course credits by conducting criminal trials and sentencings in the Provincial Court in Vancouver. The students receive feedback from lawyers and judges who volunteer their time. A Provincial Court judge continues to lead the course and serve as an adjunct professor at the law school while other judges serve as faculty. *Photo: Cliff MacArthur*

The Court welcomed a delegation from Ecuador on November 7, 2024. Chief Judge Gillespie and Judge Wolf discussed our Indigenous courts with them while Judge Jamieson discussed his experiences in the New Westminster First Nation Court.

The group also heard from lawyers attending remotely to describe how they access files and develop submissions on appropriate healing plan.



Indigenous Court elders from the Squamish Nation, joined by representatives of the BC Provincial Court and the Ministry of the Attorney General, welcomed Malaysian government officials and community elders on July 3, 2024. A delegation of 27 people from the Malaysian State of Sarawak and the Consulate General of Malaysia visited Vancouver with two goals: to learn about BC's Indigenous Courts and about the province's hydroelectric projects.

To assist with the first goal, the group met with Indigenous Court elders at the North Vancouver courthouse followed by meetings with Associate Chief Judge Susan Wishart and BC's Attorney General Niki Sharma. Court Services Branch staff then led the visitors on a brief tour of the Robson Square Courthouse and Vancouver Law Courts.

Law school | Guest lecturer, Evidence course, University of Victoria Faculty of Law | Mentors, "Evening with Women Judges", University of Victoria Faculty of Law | Instructor and faculty, Advocacy course labs, Peter A. Allard School of Law | Host and participants, First Year Woman Law Students Welcome Evening, Thompson Rivers University Faculty of Law | A... llard School of Law | Judge, moot court practice, University of Victoria Faculty of Law Sopink... first An... School... Faculty... Bail He... for Wo... training... Crimina... Ubuntu... of Victo... Interns... at York U... table me... Kamloop... adversity... Bar Ass... Court K... Worksh... "Consi... elemen... Kamloo... New Ju... Institut... Board ...

In February 2025, Supreme Court of Canada Chief Justice Wagner and Justices Karakatsanis and Kasirer visited Victoria as part of the 150th anniversary commemoration of Canada's highest court. During the visit they met with local judges to hear about their work and concerns, observed the Victoria Integrated Court and learned from participants about the positive impact of the Court's community-based approach. They also met with the Elders and judge from the Duncan First Nations Court to hear how they use restorative justice to achieve balance and healing.

Other visitors to our Indigenous courts included BC Court of Appeal Chief Justice Leonard Marchand who observed reconciliation in action at the New Westminster First Nations Court on August 9, 2024.

Judges often speak to legal and other groups. Shown here, Judge Derek Mah at a UBC LSLAP Chinese Law Students' Association dinner.

... and speaking to a law class at agee Secondary School.

Judges joined a collaboration between the Justice Education Society and Surrey Courthouse staff to host "Futures in Justice" in January 2025.

Kamloops judges and court staff hosted members of the Thompson Rivers University Faculty of Law Criminal Law Club for their 2nd Annual Mock Bail Hearing Competition in February 2025. Five judges and seven sheriffs opened courtrooms at the Kamloops Law Courts after hours for the law students to present Crown and defence arguments in mock bail hearings. The judges assessed the students' advocacy and provided feedback.

Regional roundup

Vancouver Island region

Vancouver Island is a beautiful region of coastline, farmland, forests, and mountains with diverse court locations in the area ranging from Victoria to Port Hardy and Ucluelet to Powell River. The region's judges also sit in four specialized courts: Victoria Integrated Court, Duncan First Nations Court, and Intimate Partner Violence Courts in Nanaimo and Duncan. Island judges travel by boat and plane to get to some of the region's more remote court locations.

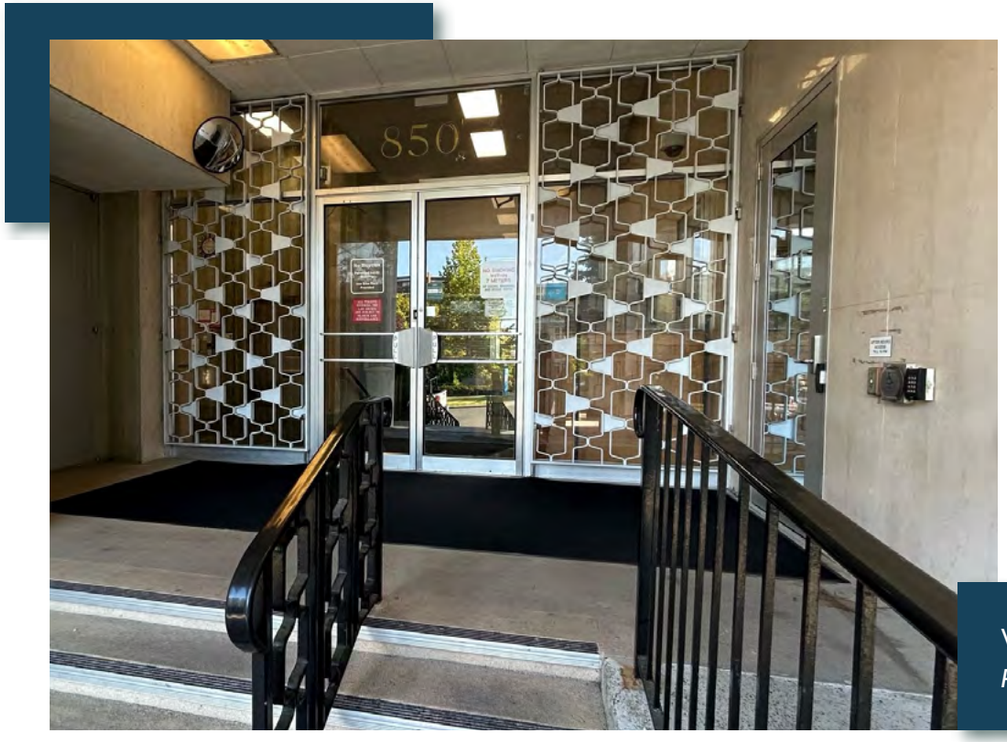
Highlights in 2024 included the Provincial Court accepting invitations from the Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations to sit in their communities.

On April 9, June 4, and August 13, 2024, a judge, court clerk, sheriff, probation officer, and lawyers travelled by boat to Flores Island to hold court. On the first sitting day, the Ahousaht community welcomed the Court with a traditional song and lunch during the court break. To have the Court sit in their community meant people didn't have to take a 40 minute boat ride to attend court in Tofino. Previously, the time and cost of boat transportation had often resulted in warrants being issued for people who couldn't attend.

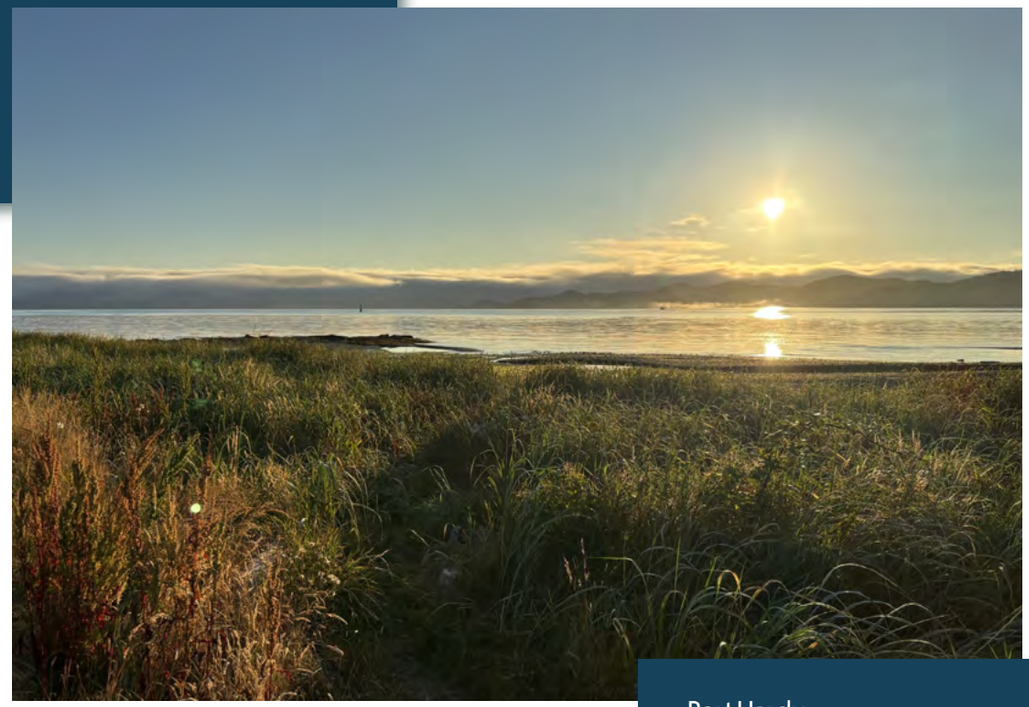
For the first court sitting in Maaqutusiis, Chief Judge Gillespie, Regional Administrative Judge Rogers and the court team joined members of the Ahousaht First Nation and community for lunch and an exchange of ceremonial gifts.

In September 2024, the Court also moved its sitting location on Vancouver Island's west coast from the town of Tofino to a building in Tla-o-qui-aht territory.

Vancouver Island judges continue to be actively involved in their communities, speaking to classes at the University of Victoria, its Faculty of Law, and at Vancouver Island University, judging moot courts, engaging with high school and college students, and teaching legal education programs.



Victoria Courthouse
Photo: Andrea Jerez



Port Hardy
Photo: Chief Judge Gillespie

Specialized courts

In addition to its Indigenous courts, the BC Provincial Court has established four other types of specialized courts to better meet communities' needs. They include:

- a Drug Treatment Court in Vancouver
- a Community Court in downtown Vancouver
- integrated sentencing courts in Victoria and Kelowna
- local courts dealing with intimate partner violence

These courts use a therapeutic or problem-solving approach to sentence people while still holding them accountable. Participants must plead guilty and be willing to work with supportive multi-disciplinary teams to address the underlying causes of their criminal behaviour.

Specialized criminal courts

> **The role of the judge in our specialized courts is a key component of participants' success. It means a lot to many clients to have not just the support of the therapeutic teams but the continuing engagement and encouragement of a judge who understands their unique circumstances.**
>
> Chief Judge Melissa Gillespie

Downtown Community Court, Vancouver
Photo: Justice Education Society

Caseload

New cases by division

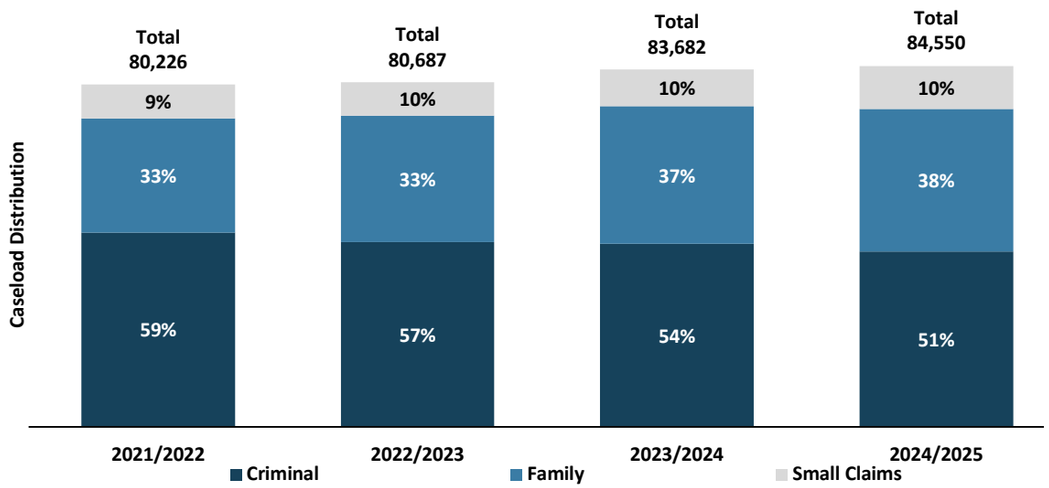
Excluding traffic and bylaw matters usually dealt with by judicial justices, there were 84,550 cases initiated in the Provincial Court of British Columbia in 2024/25[9]. These numbers are slightly higher than the previous year.

Figures 9 and 10 show Provincial Court caseloads over the last four[10] years[11]. Overall, since 2021/22, the caseload volume has remained relatively stable. Of note, the volume of new criminal cases has declined while family and small claims caseload volumes have increased.

Figure 9 - New Case Numbers by Division, 2021/22- 2024/25

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Adult Criminal	44,335	41,716	41,121	39,414
Youth Criminal	1,236	1,552	1,769	1,658
FLA	18,698	21,357	23,547	24,246
Child Protection	7,938	8,323	8,634	9,136
Small Claims	8,019	7,739	8,611	10,096
Total	80,226	80,687	83,682	84,550

Figure 10 - New Case Percentages by Division, 2021/22- 2024/25



9. New case counts include all cases typically overseen by a judge. Therefore, family subsequent applications are included, and traffic and bylaw cases are excluded.

10. Caseload data from fiscal year 2020/21 have been excluded as a baseline for comparison in this report, as the temporary suspension of some court operations due to the COVID pandemic resulted in atypical figures that would distort multi-year trend analysis.

11. Data are preliminary and subject to change - small fluctuations in the reported totals and percentages for new cases are expected due to continuing improvements in data quality.

Criminal

Although the total number of adult criminal cases has decreased in the last four years, it is the number of administration of justice offences, the least complex criminal matters, that has declined significantly. The number of crimes against the person, the most serious, complex, and lengthy cases, has not changed materially.

Crimes against the person, including sexual assaults and violent offences, now form the majority of the Court's criminal caseload. The Provincial Court deals with most of the sexual assault and violent offence cases in BC. A high proportion of them proceed to trial. These trials often involve evidence issues and applications for relief under the *Charter of Rights*, and they last multiple days or weeks.

As the Court's criminal caseload has changed, the number of short, simple trials has fallen significantly, leaving more complex and difficult cases, with higher rates of proceeding and longer trials. The reduction in the overall Provincial Court criminal caseload is offset by changes in the categories of cases coming into the Court and their growing complexity.

Youth

Youth criminal cases comprise a small portion of the Court's criminal caseload, and the number of new youth cases in 2024/25 decreased by 6% compared to last year. However, new youth criminal cases have increased by 34% in the last four years, although data from 2020 through 2022 should be interpreted with caution due to the temporary suspension of some court operations during the pandemic.

Family

Most family cases in the Provincial Court are governed by the *Family Law Act* (*FLA*) or the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (*CFCSA*). In 2024/25 new cases of both types reached their highest point in the past four years. However, data from 2020 through 2022 should be interpreted with caution due to the temporary suspension of some court operations during the pandemic.

- The number of new *FLA* cases and subsequent applications increased by 3% over last year, and by 30% compared to 2021/2022.
- The number of new *CFCSA* cases and subsequent applications increased by 6% over last year, and by 15% compared to 2021/2022.

Four out of five new family cases (81%) come from subsequent applications in existing files.[12] The percentage of new cases from subsequent applications has consistently been slightly higher in *CFCSA* cases than in *FLA* (88% vs. 79%) over the past four years.

Small claims

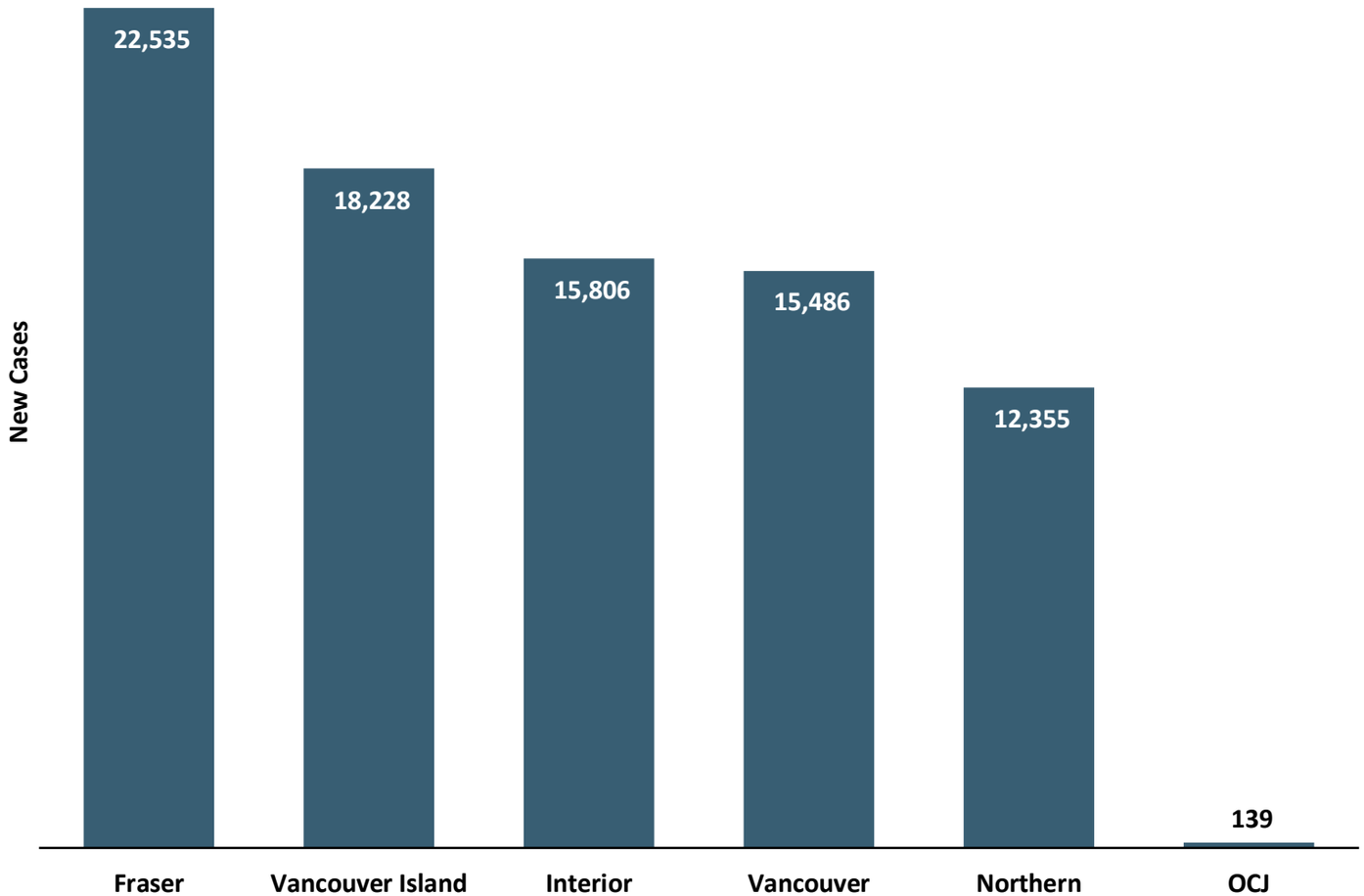
New small claims cases have increased significantly. They have risen by 26% since 2021/22, with the most notable increase (17%) happening this year.

12. Subsequent applications are additional motions or applications filed in a case after the initial application is filed. Applications to change or enforce an order are a common example of *FLA* subsequent applications. Under the *CFCSA*, subsequent applications are required to determine custody of a child who is not returned to a parent.

New cases by region

The Fraser region continued to have the highest proportion of the province's new caseload (27%) in 2024/25, while the small remote locations administered directly by the Office of the Chief Judge (OCJ) had the lowest (<1%). These distributions have been consistent for the past four years.

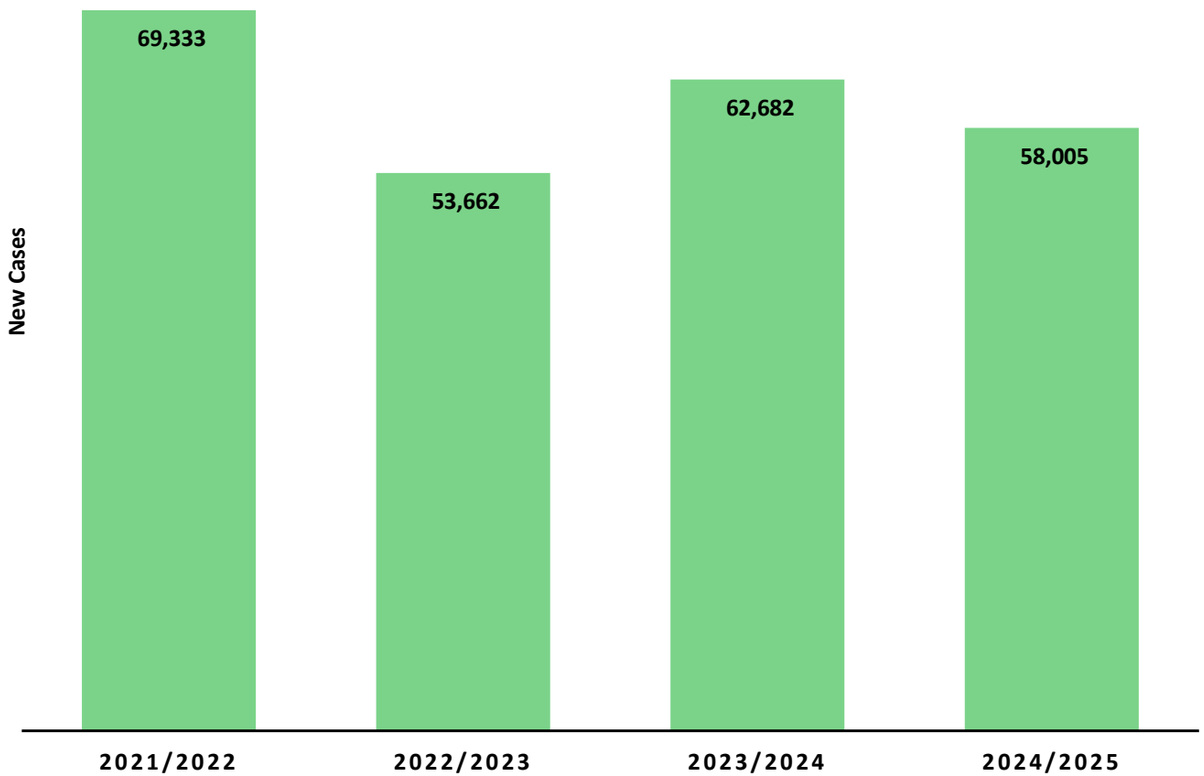
Figure 11 - New Cases by Region, 2024/25



Traffic and bylaw cases

In addition to the criminal, family, and small claims cases typically handled by judges, the Provincial Court also handles traffic and bylaw cases (usually adjudicated by judicial justices). In 2024/25, there were 58,005 new traffic and bylaw cases, down 7% from last year.

Figure 12 - New Traffic and Bylaw Cases, 2021/22 – 2024/25



The Justice Centre

Located in Burnaby, the Court's Justice Centre provides access from anywhere in the province to judicial justices who conduct bail hearings from 8:00 am to 11:00 pm daily, including weekends, and consider applications for search warrants and production orders 24 hours a day, seven-days-a-week. About two dozen judicial justices work on site or remotely, using telephone and sophisticated video conferencing methods.

In 2024/25, they considered 31,701 applications for warrants and production orders, an increase of 2% over last year, and conducted 21,782 bail hearings, a decrease of 10%.

Regional roundup

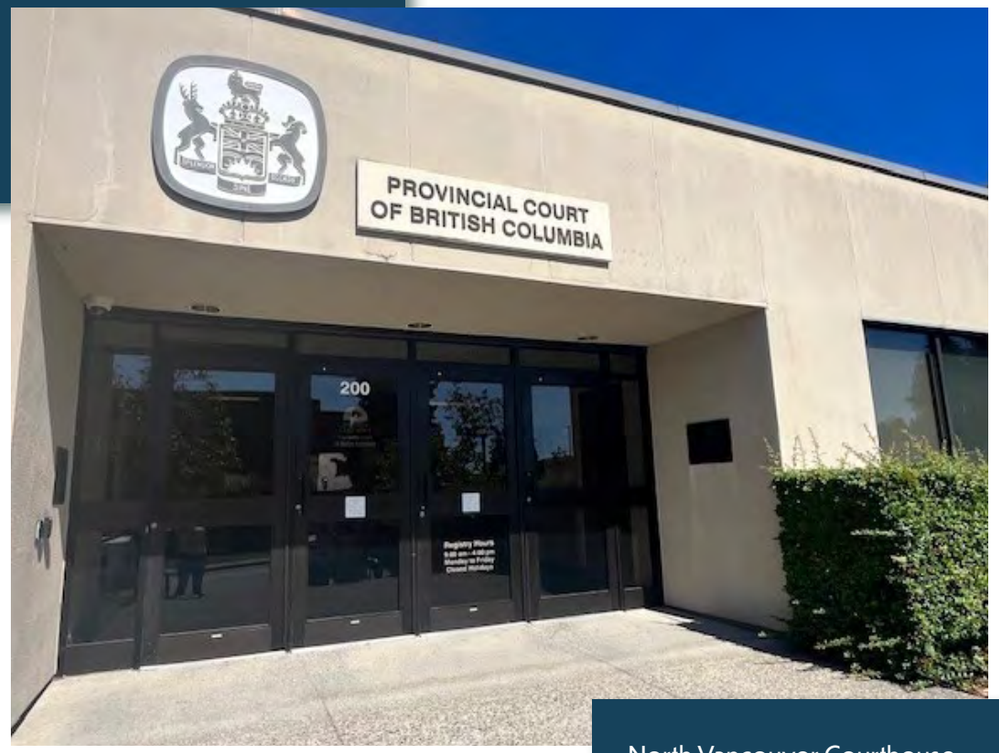
Vancouver region

The Vancouver region has courthouses in six very different communities: the criminal law courthouse in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside; the civil, family, and youth courthouse in Robson Square; courthouses hearing all types of cases in North Vancouver, Richmond, and Sechelt; and a circuit court in Pemberton. The region also has three specialized courts: Vancouver's Downtown Community Court, Drug Treatment Court, and an Indigenous sentencing court in North Vancouver. Working in all these locations, judges in the region appreciate how important each is to the communities they serve.

Like their colleagues around the province, in addition to presiding in courtrooms, Vancouver region judges review warrant applications, conduct case and pretrial conferences, write judgments, and conduct research to stay current in the law.

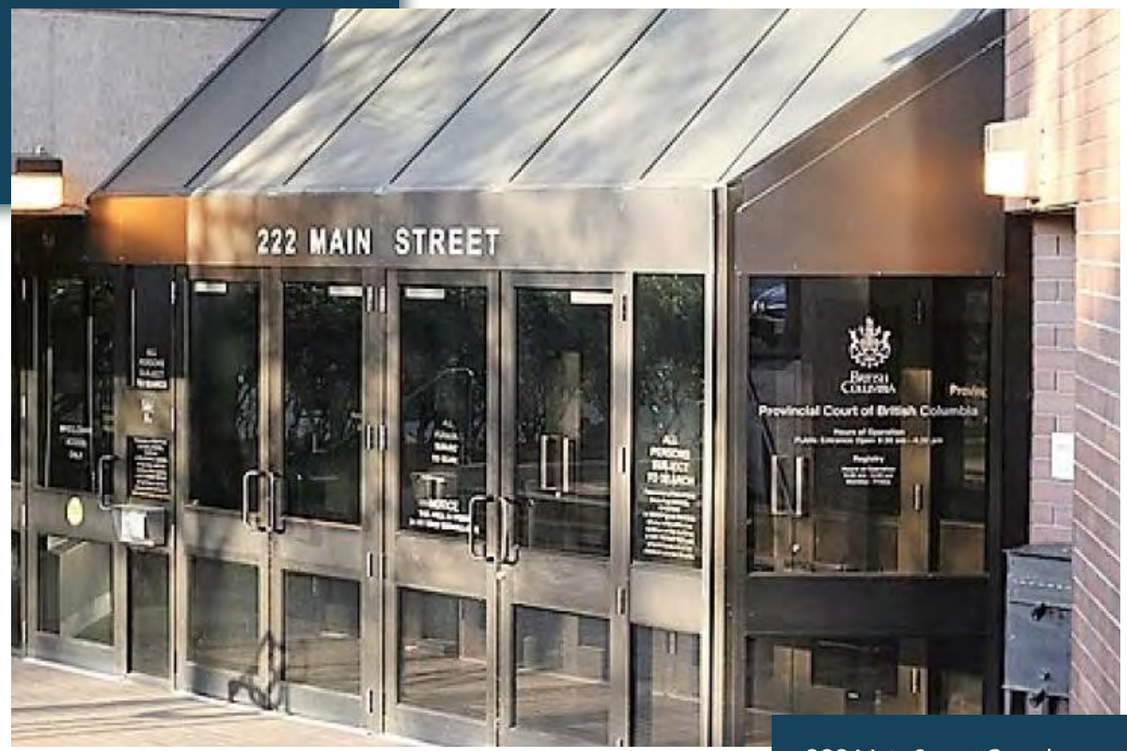
Judges in the region engage enthusiastically with the communities they serve. Beyond their judicial duties, judges are active as volunteers in sports and other activities, as legal educators, and as mentors to newly appointed judges.

For example, one judge conducts an evening legal clinic for law students at the Peter A. Allard Law School at UBC, while another chairs the Court's legal intern program where senior law students observe court and assist in legal research for a term. A third judge is a sessional lecturer in criminal law at the law school. Other judges participate in law school moot courts and speak to law classes. Judges also meet regularly with high school students on court visits arranged through the Justice Education Society.



North Vancouver Courthouse
Photo: Holly Castle

Some court locations in the region have heightened security needs for court staff and judges. Judges at the Main Street courthouse in Vancouver participate in the innovative "Safe Walk and Safe Ride Program" where sheriffs' escorts ensure the safety of staff and judges to and from transit hubs or parkades in the Downtown Eastside.



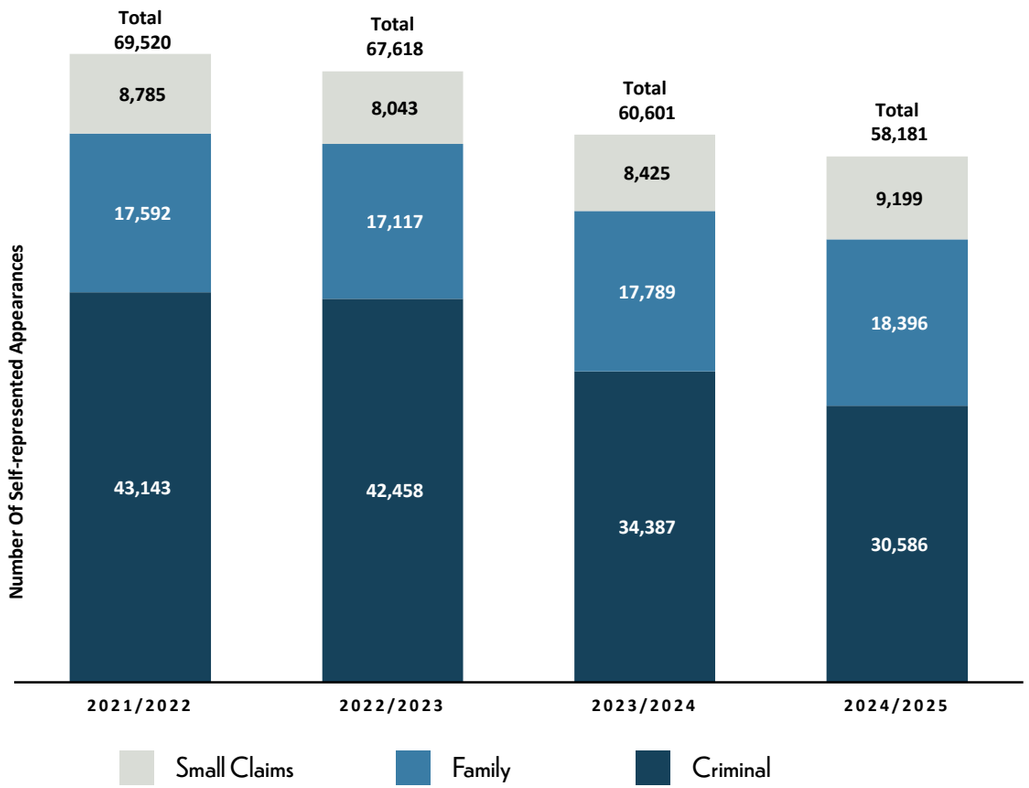
222 Main Street Courthouse

Richmond Courthouse
Photo: Alvin Lau

Self-represented litigants

The Court oversaw 58,181 self-represented appearances in 2024/25,[13] representing a 4% decrease from last year.[14]

Figure 13 - Number of Self-Represented Appearances by Division, 2021/22 – 2024/25



The number of self-represented appearances is highest in the criminal division (it includes appearances early in a case before accused persons retain lawyers), but the rate of self-representation is lowest[15] there.

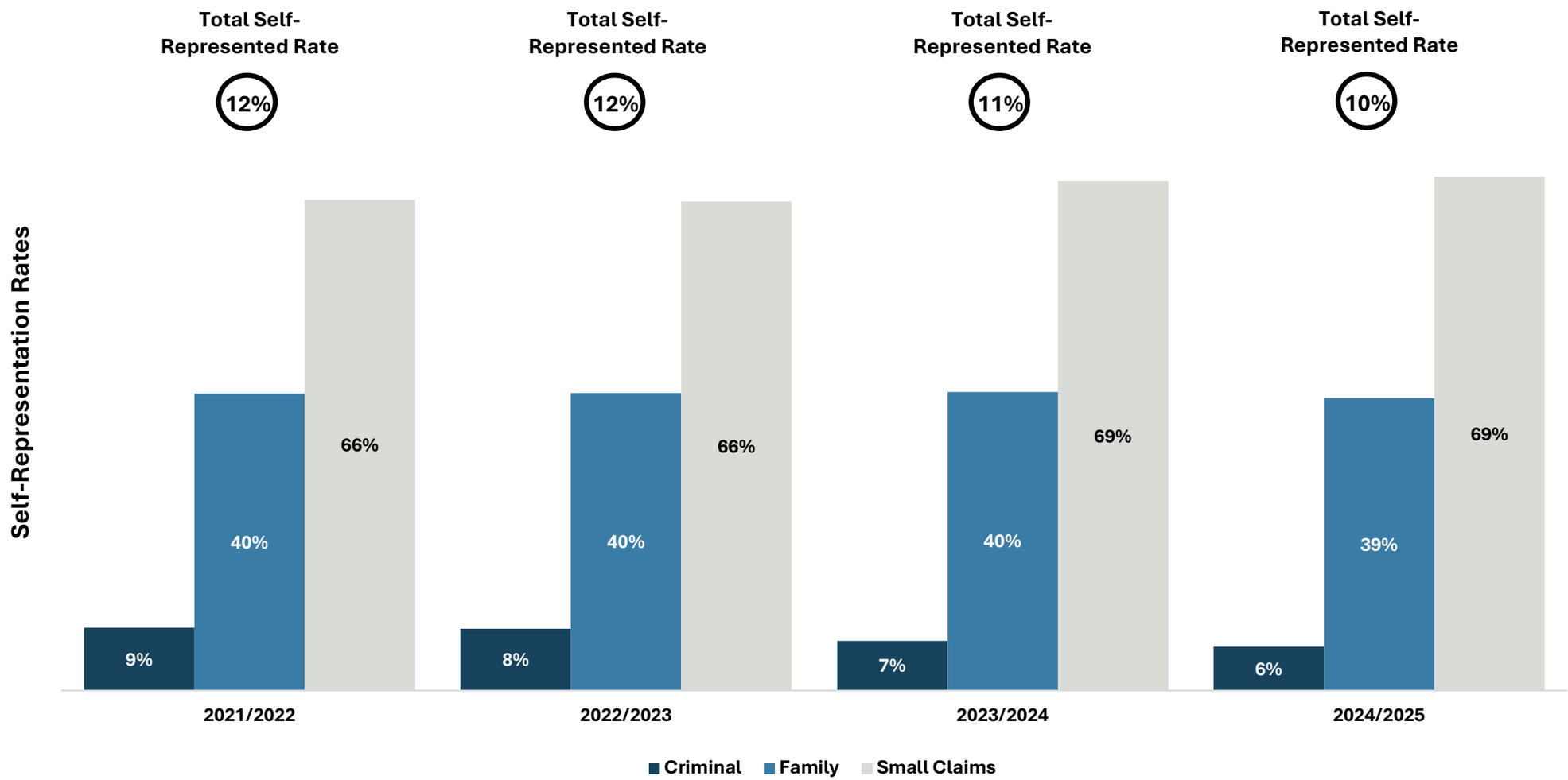
Figure 14 shows the self-representation rate for each division over time. The overall rate of self-representation has declined from 2021/22 (12%) to 2024/25 (10%). While the criminal division has the lowest rate of self-representation among the three divisions (10%), it accounts for the majority of all self-represented appearances across the Court (53%). As a result, this larger volume of criminal matters contributes significantly to the overall self-representation rate.

13. A self-represented appearance is when a party is recorded as appearing in court with no counsel or agent present. Data Source: Criminal BI Database. Data are preliminary and subject to change. This analysis counts only appearances that took place, excluding cases that have been adjourned or cancelled before the appearance or that do not have any appearance duration recorded.

14. Data are preliminary and subject to change - small fluctuations in the reported totals and percentages for new cases are expected due to continuing improvements in data quality.

15. The rate of self-represented appearances is the percentage of all appearances in which a party appeared without a lawyer or agent.

Figure 14 - Rate of Self-Represented Appearances by Division, 2021/22 - 2024/25

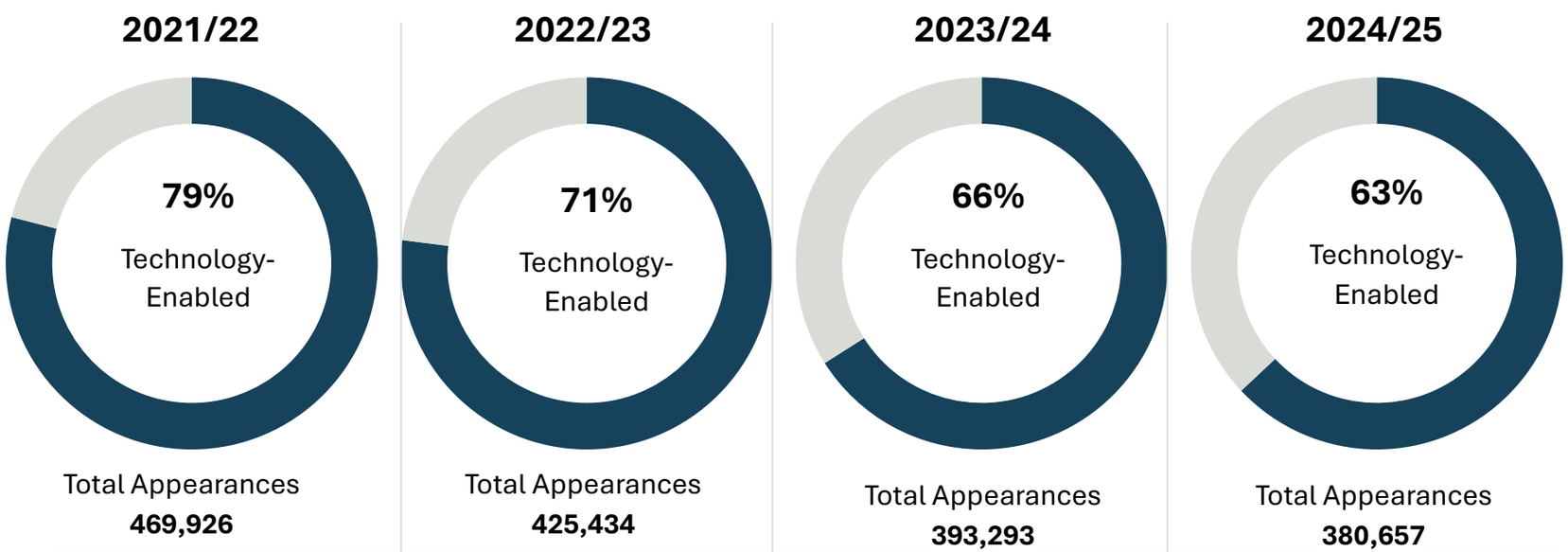


Remote appearances

When some court operations were temporarily suspended due to COVID in 2020, the Court moved swiftly to enable more technology-enabled appearances using Microsoft Teams video and/or audio, and telephone. There was a substantial increase in not just the volume of virtual appearances but also the types of appearances made remotely.

The high volume usage of technology-enabled appearances continues, as many bail hearings, nearly all small claims settlement conferences, family case conferences, family management conferences, and some criminal sentencing hearings are held virtually. Although down slightly from last year, approximately 63% of all court appearances, excluding traffic and bylaw, were technology-enabled in 2024/25.

Figure 15 – Percentage of Technology Enabled Appearances, 2021/22- 2024/25



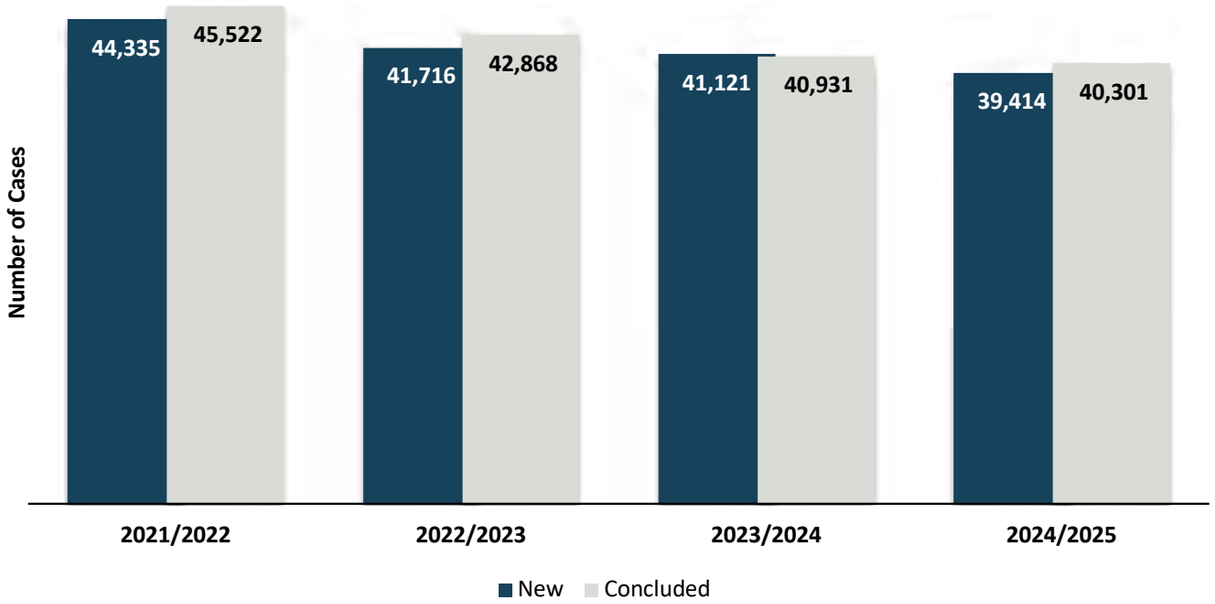
Monitoring operational court standards

Starting in 2004, the Office of the Chief Judge (OCJ) developed operational standards to assess the Court's ability to manage its caseload effectively. These standards represent objective goals and performance targets that the Court strives to meet with its available judicial resources. Where standards are not met, the OCJ examines underlying causes, monitors trends, and takes appropriate steps, including reallocating available resources where possible.

Adult criminal case completion rates

The Court's standard for the adult criminal case completion rate is 100%, calculated over a fiscal year.[16] This measure provides an indication of the Court's ability to conclude cases at the same rate that new cases enter the system. The completion rate has been at or over 100% for the past four fiscal years. In 2024/25, the completion rate was 102% while the numbers of new and concluded cases decreased slightly.

Figure 16 - Adult Criminal Case Completion Rates, 2021/22 - 2024/25



16. Data Source: Criminal BI Database. Rates are calculated by dividing the total number of concluded cases in a fiscal year by the total number of new cases in that year. If the numbers are equal, the completion rate is 100%. Concluded case information is only available in the criminal division.

On-time case processing

The purpose of this measure is to assess the timeliness with which Provincial Court cases are concluded. This is accomplished by examining the percentage of "judge cases"[17] reaching a final or important interim outcome (disposition or significant event) within established timelines. This information is currently only available for the criminal division.

This standard reflects the Court's goal for early conclusion of criminal cases. Some factors that affect this measure are beyond the Court's control, such as whether an accused person sets the matter for trial, the amount of time it takes for the Crown to provide disclosure, and lawyers' availability when setting court dates.

The Court's standard for criminal cases is to have 90% of cases concluded within 180 days. The Court has not met this standard during the past four years. However, with improvements in data collection, the Court can now track the time between specific events to determine where improvements, if required, can be made.

Figure 17 - Percentage of "Judge Cases" Concluded within 180, 365, and 540 days, 2021/22 - 2024/25

Percent of Adult Criminal Cases Concluded within...

Year	180 Days	365 Days	540 Days
2021/22	52%	79%	91%
2022/23	53%	80%	91%
2023/24	54%	81%	92%
2024/25	54%	82%	92%
Four-Year Average	54%	80%	91%

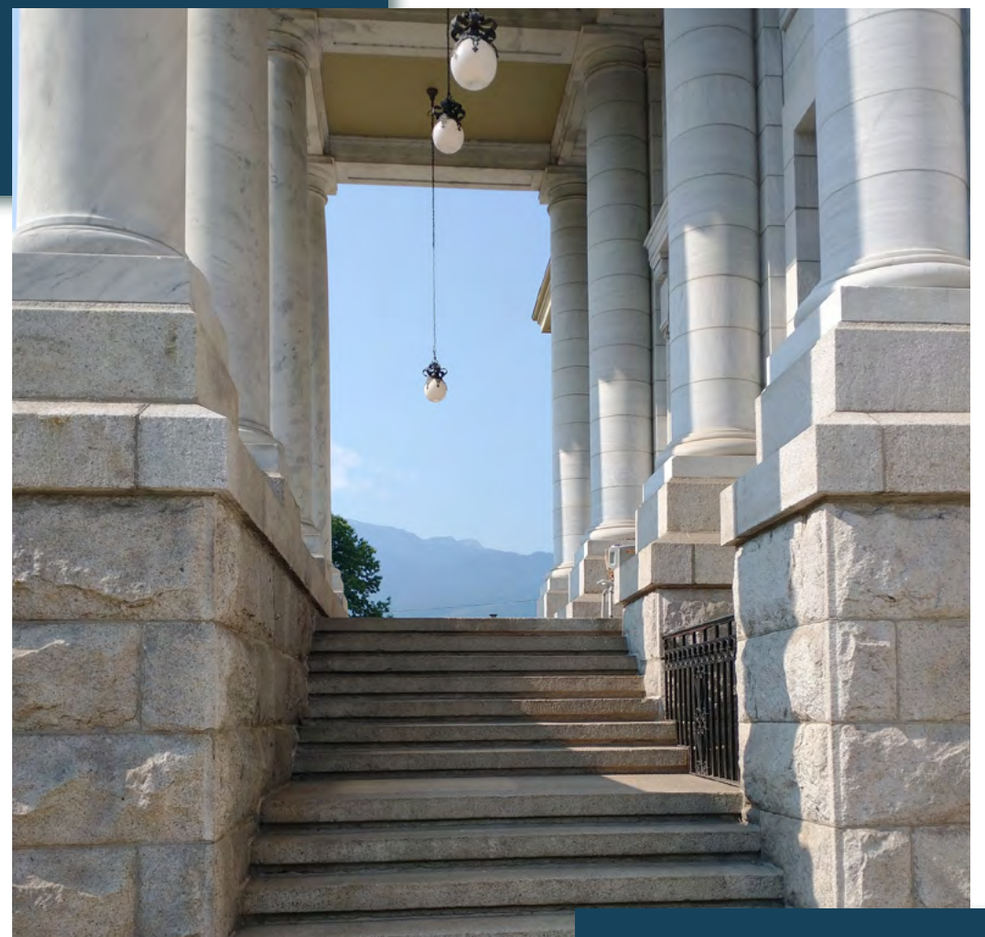
17. Cases typically heard by judges as opposed to cases typically heard by judicial justices.

Pending cases

A pending case[18] is a criminal case that has not yet been completed and for which a future appearance has been scheduled. The pending status of a court case is distinct from the total age of the case. However, the two measures are linked, as pending cases that exceed a certain age are of concern due to the possibility of unreasonable delay.

Case age calculations for pending cases count from the date an Information is sworn to the next scheduled appearance occurring after the "as at" date (in this case, March 31, 2025). These calculations exclude inactive time (e.g. bench warrants). The number and age of pending cases provide a general indication of the Court's ability to process criminal cases in a timely manner.

For criminal cases, the Court's standard for pending cases is for 60% of its pending caseload to be less than 240 days old. The Court met its standard this year - as it has for the past four years.



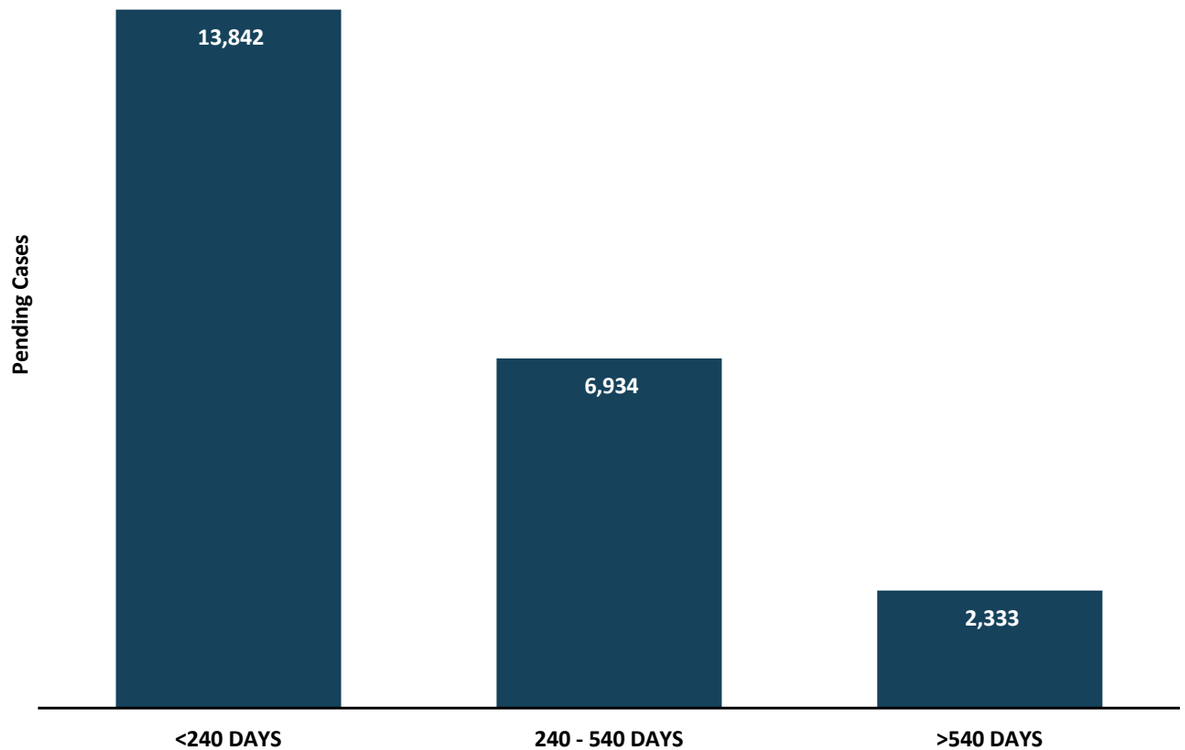
Revelstoke Courthouse
Photo: Judicial Justice Burgess

18. Pending case information is currently only available in the criminal division, as there is no agreed upon definition of case conclusion in the family and small claims divisions.

As of March 31, 2025, there were 23,109 adult criminal pending cases, of which 60% had a pending date less than 240 days from the sworn date (that is, there were fewer than eight months between the date the information was sworn and the next appearance date).[19] The remaining 9,267 (40%) cases had pending dates greater than 240 days from the sworn date.

Figure 18 shows the number of adult criminal pending cases in the Provincial Court system on March 31, 2025, broken down by age category. The total number of pending cases in 2024/25 decreased by 5%, compared to 2023/24.

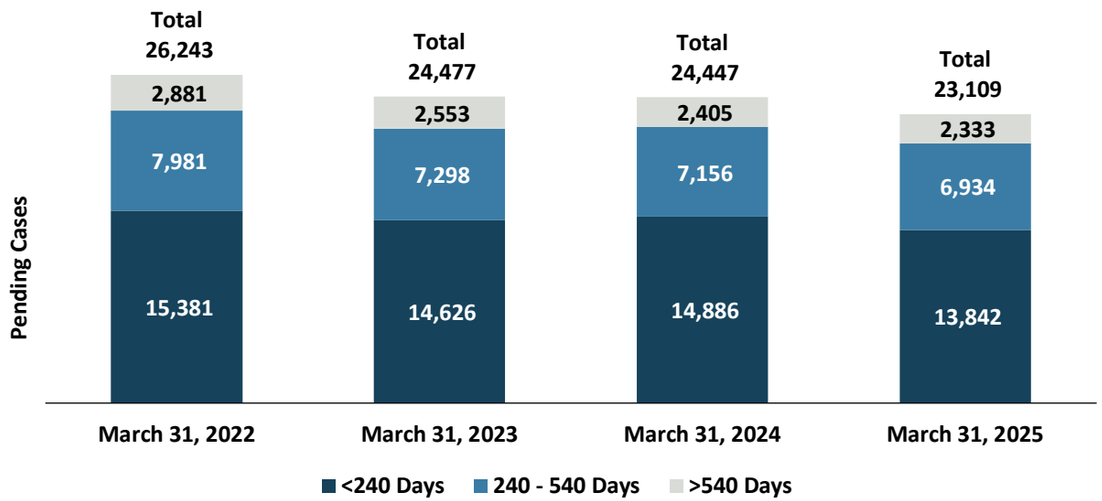
Figure 18 - Adult Criminal Pending Cases by Age Category, 2024/25[20]

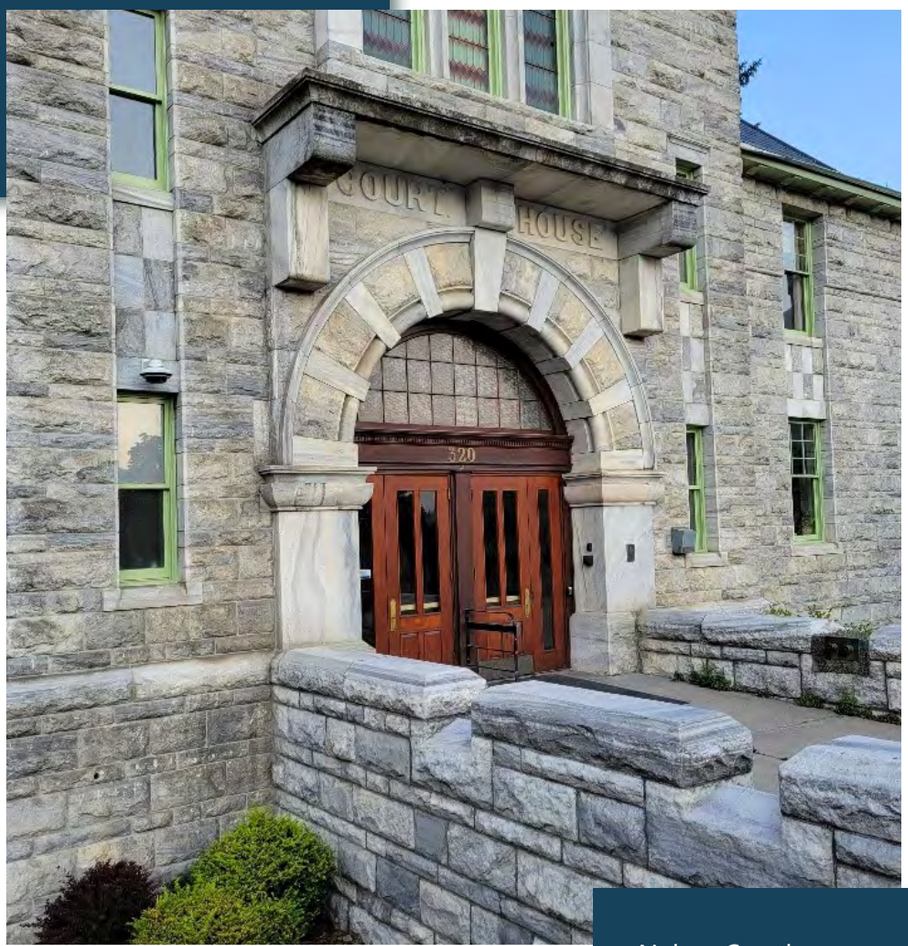


19. The current report is a snapshot as at March 31, 2025. These results are preliminary. Pending cases are likely to adjust upwards due to delays in compiling the data.

20. Data source: Criminal BI Database.

Figure 19 – Distribution of Adult Criminal Pending Cases Over Time





Nelson Courthouse
Photo: Judge Sicotte

Province-wide time to trial

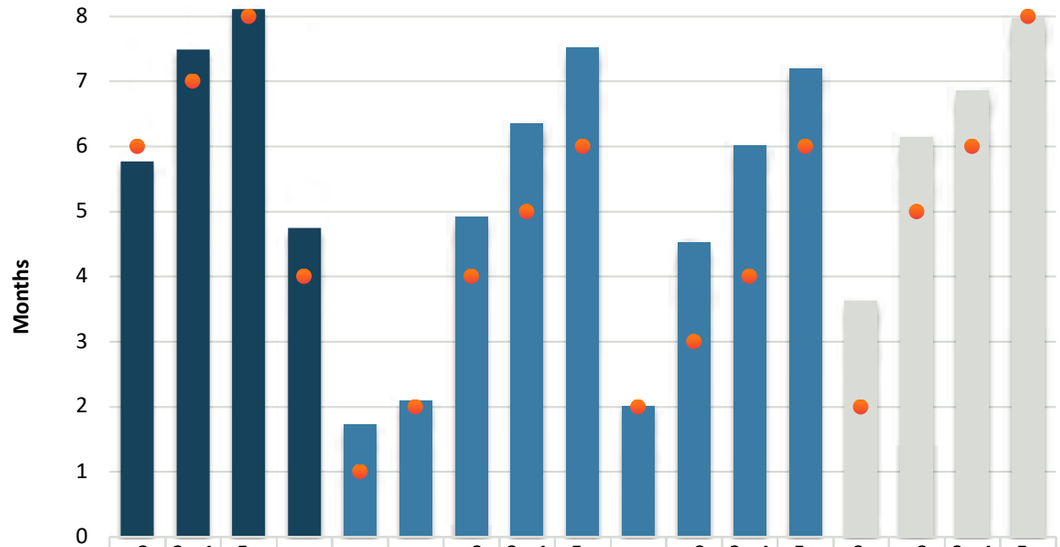
The Court continues to measure time to trial from the date a request or order is made for a conference or trial to the date when cases of that type can typically be scheduled. Time to trial does not reflect when cases are set as this depends on lawyers' availability. Rather, it is an estimate of when court time would be available to schedule a particular activity.[21]

In 2005, the Court endorsed standards to measure whether dates were being offered for trial in a timely manner. These standards reflect the Court's goals for when it ought to be able to offer time for specified trial events. In June 2016, those standards and the time estimates they govern were revised[22] to capture Summary Proceedings Court[23] matters and capture longer trials better.

The Court was over-standard in most areas in 2024/25. However, in most categories, the time to trial results stayed the same or decreased over the previous year. Across all criminal and family time to trial estimates, delays decreased or stayed the same.

Unlike results in the other divisions, most small claims time to trial estimates experienced an increase over last year, especially for longer (5+ days) trials.

Figure 20 - Average Provincial Time to Trial, 2024/25



	<2 Day	2 - 4 Day	5+ Day	Youth	FMC	FSC	<2 Day	2 - 4 Day	5+ Day	FCC	<2 Day	2 - 4 Day	5+ Day	S. Conf	<2 Day	2 - 4 Day	5+ Day
	Adult Criminal						FLA				CFCSA			Small Claims			
Time to Trial	5.8	7.5	8.1	4.8	1.7	2.1	4.9	6.4	7.5	2.0	4.5	6.0	7.2	3.6	6.1	6.9	8.0
"Standards"	6	7	8	4	1	2	4	5	6	2	3	4	6	2	5	6	8

The Court produces comprehensive Time to Trial reports twice a year and posts them on the Court Reports page of its website.

21. To provide the most accurate data, other cases waiting to be scheduled are factored into the estimates. "Fast track" dates or openings created when other cases collapse are not considered, as these dates are not an accurate reflection of when the case would typically be scheduled.

22. A detailed explanation of time to trial definitions, calculations, and standards appears in Appendix 2.

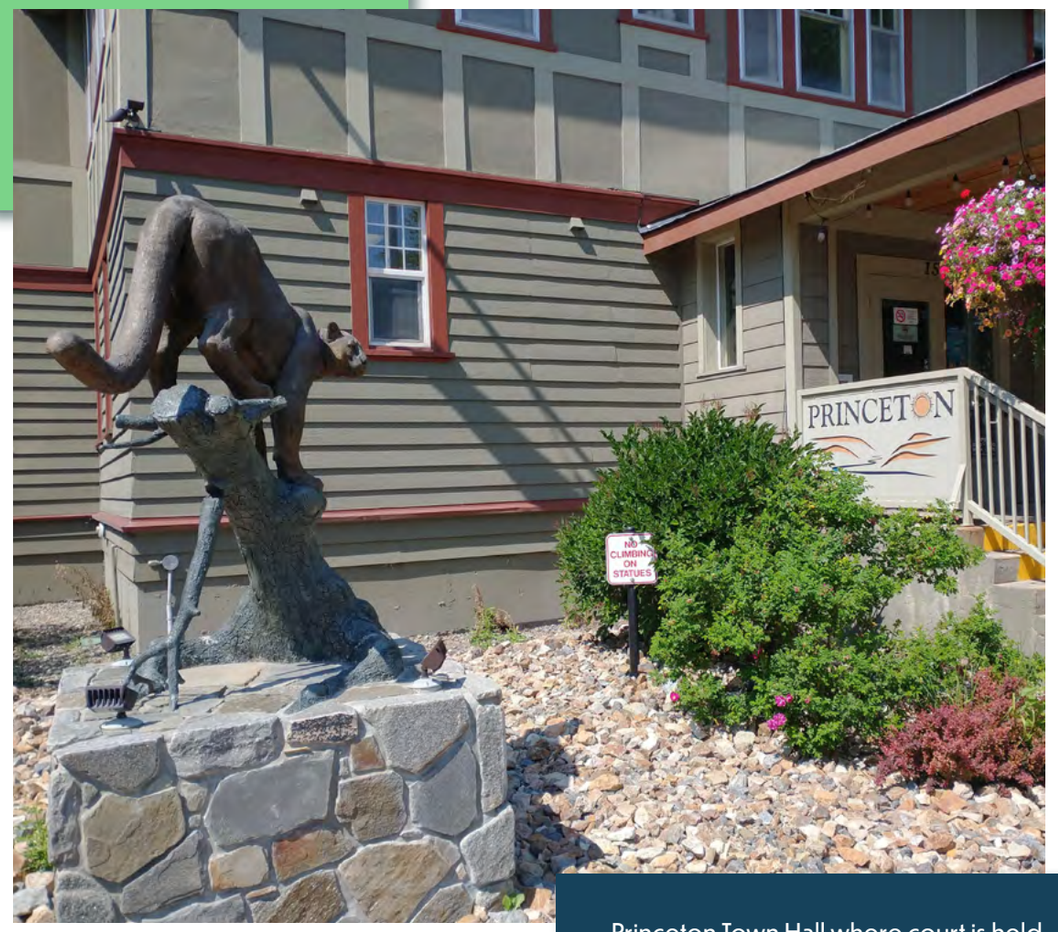
23. In seven of the Court's busiest locations, Summary Proceedings Courts conduct trials, hearings, or dispositions set for less than half a day.

Efforts to reduce delays

The Court monitors time to trial and pending case data closely. In almost all areas of the province, the Court is able to offer court time for criminal trials well below the 18-month ceiling established by the Supreme Court of Canada in the case of *R. v. Jordan*. Those locations with the longest delays are identified in the Time to Trial reports, and steps are taken to reallocate judicial resources where possible.

Court time is not the only factor leading to delays in criminal cases. Some factors are beyond the Court's control, such as the length of time it takes for the police to prepare disclosure in complex cases and lawyers' availability when setting trial dates.

As stated in *Jordan*, the Court does have a responsibility to manage cases to minimize unnecessary delay, particularly as it relates to pre-trial applications and unrealistic time estimates. The Court reviewed its case management processes after the release of the *Jordan* decision and work continues to ensure that court time is used effectively and judges are appropriately managing longer and more complex cases. Judges have access to judicial education resources on trial management.



Princeton Town Hall where court is held
Photo: Judicial Justice Burgess

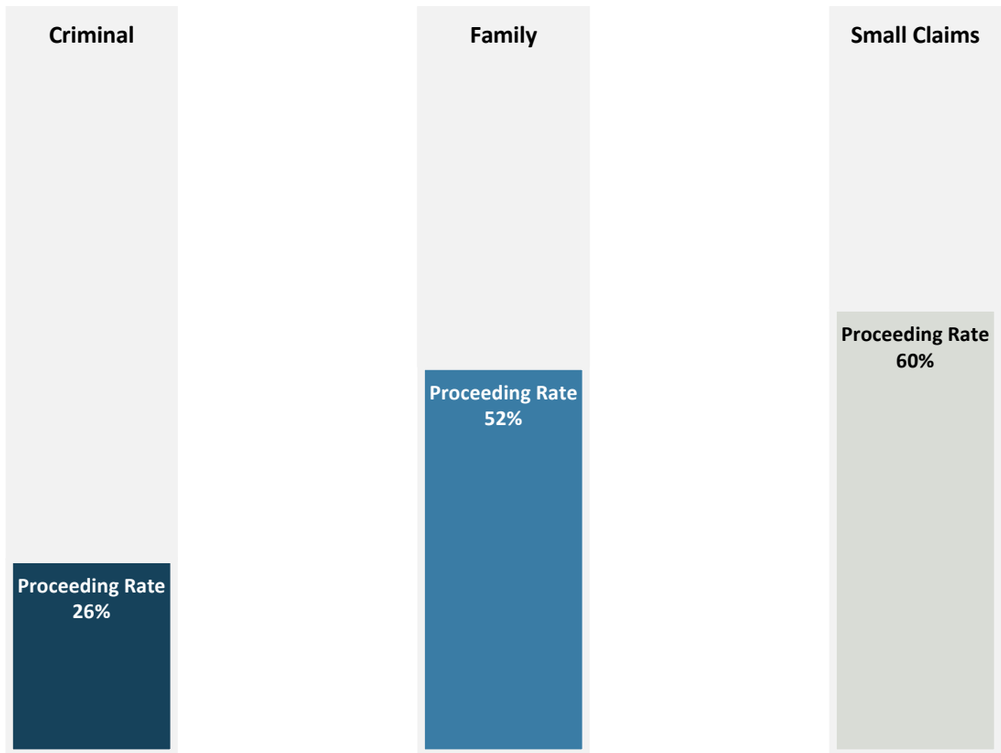
Trial events

The Court tracks outcomes for all cases that were still on the Court list on the date set for trial. In 2024/25, there were 11,459 such trial events[24], and this is consistent with last year.

There are several possible outcomes on the day of trial, one of which is that the trial proceeds.[25] Where a trial does not proceed, this is referred to as a "collapse". There are several reasons why a trial might collapse. For example, the case might settle on the day of trial before the trial begins. The Court has not established standards for collapse rates. Still, it will continue to collect and monitor this data, with particular attention to the number of cases adjourned for lack of court time.[26]

Proceeding rates capture the percentage of trials that proceeded on the first day of trial.[27] There are persistent differences in proceeding rates between divisions. Figure 21 shows the rate for each division in 2024/25.

Figure 21 - Proceeding Rates by Division, 2024/25



24. Results for cases that were never set for trial, or which did not proceed as scheduled due to adjournment, resolution, or any other reason before their first scheduled trial date are not captured under this system.

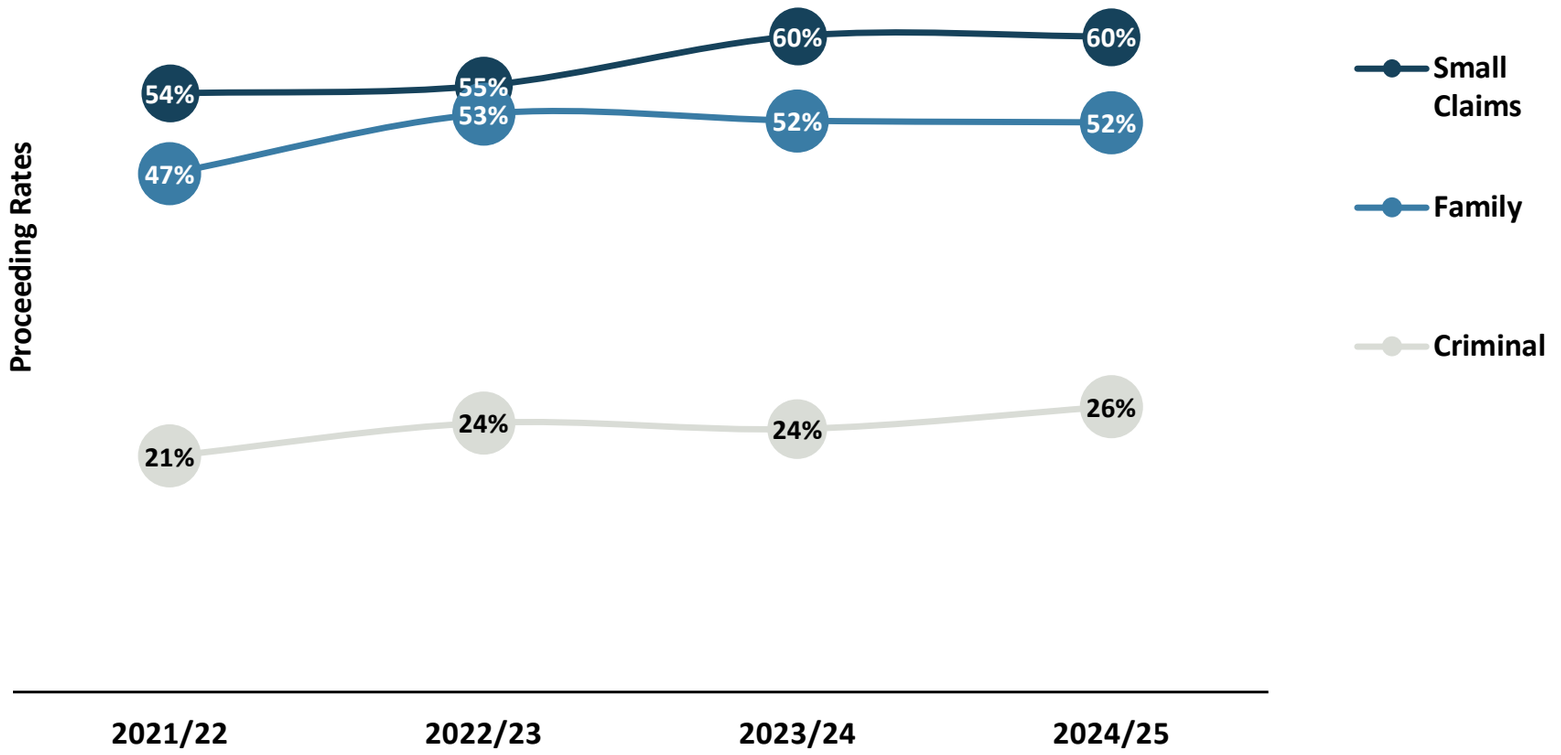
25. Defined as proceeding for trial as scheduled, with evidence or a witness being called - the outcome of the trial appearance is irrelevant from the perspective of whether the trial proceeded.

26. Lack of court time refers to a situation in which the Court has insufficient judicial resources to hear a case on the day it was scheduled.

27. Whether the case concluded is irrelevant to this determination - all that matters is that the case proceeded (as a trial) on the day it was scheduled for trial.

As shown in Figure 22, the criminal proceeding rates increased slightly, while the family and small claims rates were similar to last year.[28]

Figure 22 - Proceeding Rates by Division, 2021/22 - 2024/25

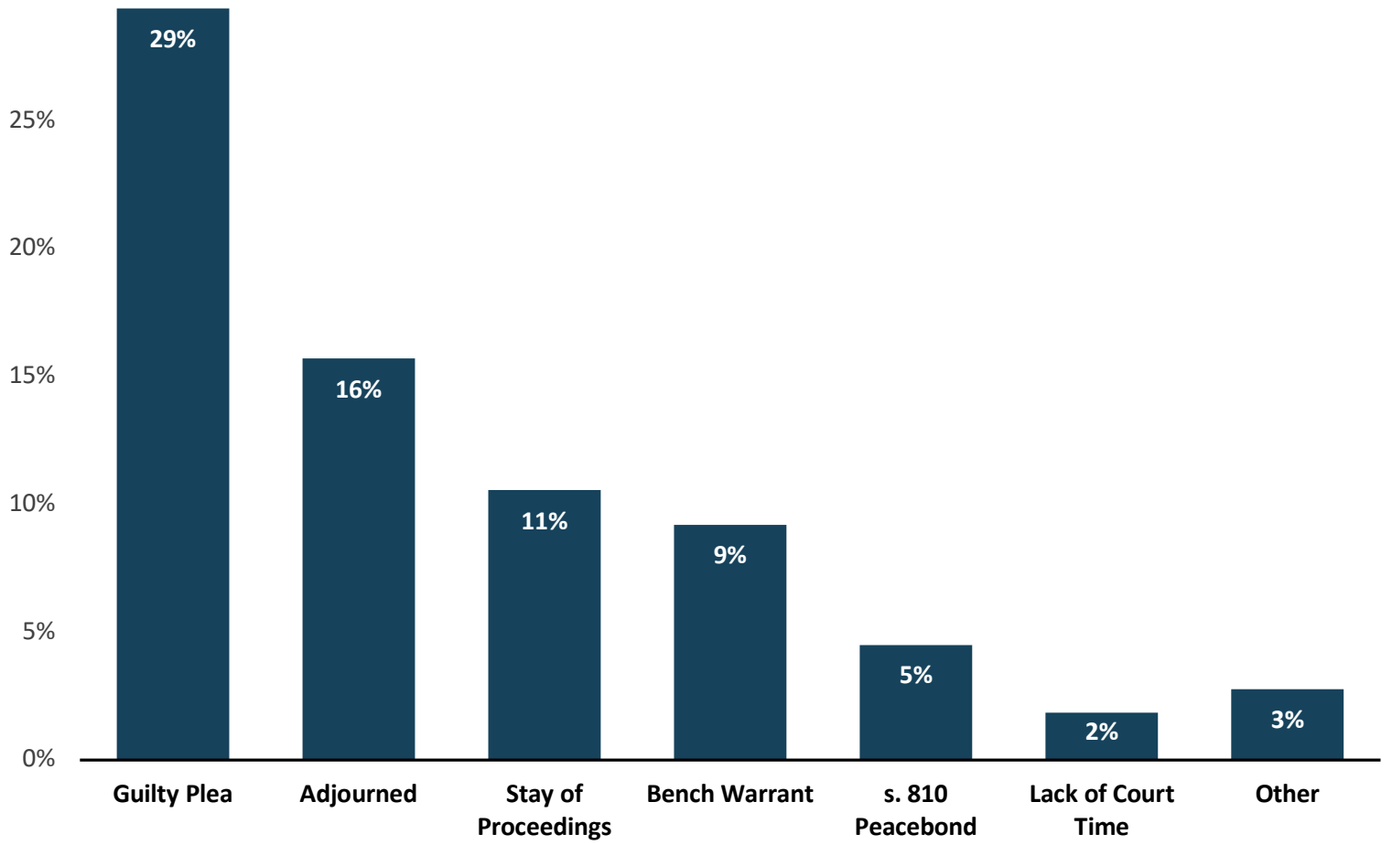


28. This figure includes blended data from three sources: stand-alone trial tracker application, interim tool for Assignment Court, and the Provincial Court Scheduling System (PCSS). While this data is now being captured solely through PCSS, historical reporting will continue to rely on other sources.

There will always be cases that do not proceed on the first day of trial - a low proceeding rate is not a cause for concern. What is important is to note the reason why cases are not proceeding and whether the case has concluded without ever proceeding to trial. Judicial case managers utilize proceeding rates to determine how many cases to schedule on a given day to maximize the use of available court time.

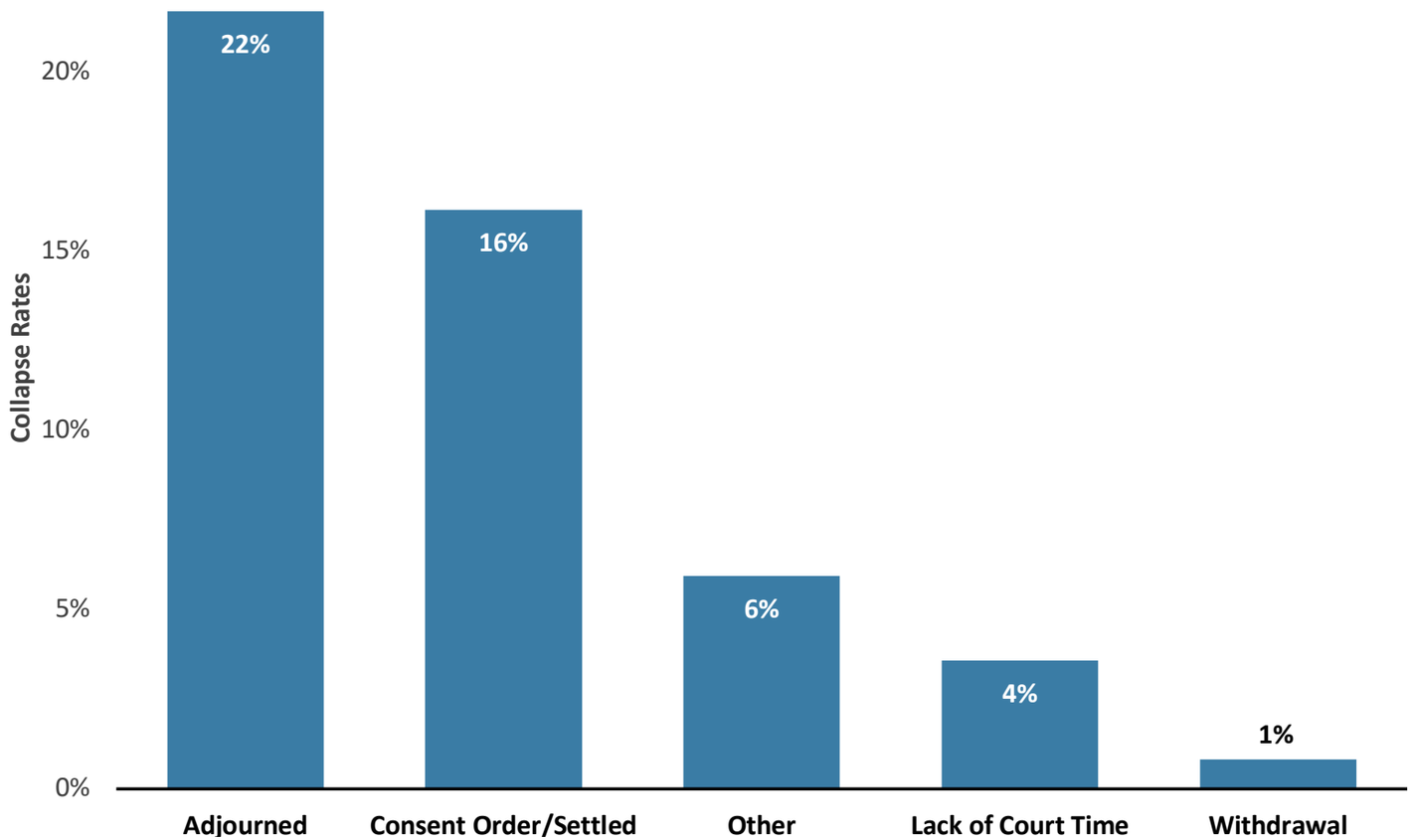
In the criminal division, 44% of the cases remaining on the list concluded on the first day of trial by ending in a guilty plea, stay of proceedings, or peace bond under *Criminal Code* section 810. Figure 23 shows the distribution of collapse reasons for the criminal division in 2024/25.

Figure 23 - Collapse Rates of Criminal Trials by Collapse Reason, 2024/25



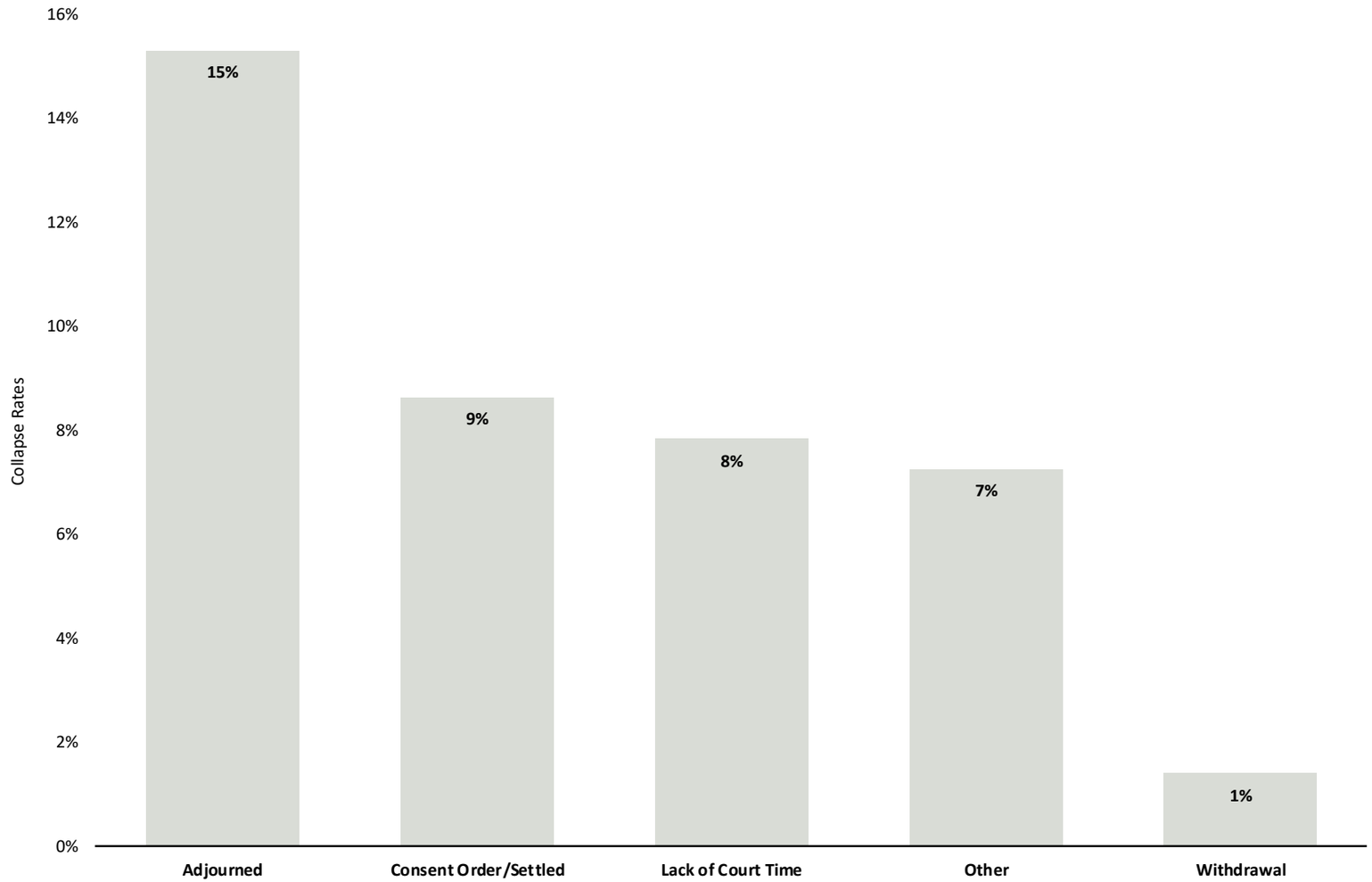
The 2024/25 proceeding rate in the family division was close to its four-year average of 51% and the same as last year, at 52%. Figure 24 shows the distribution of collapse reasons in the family division.

Figure 24 - Collapse Rates of Family Trials by Collapse Reason, 2024/25



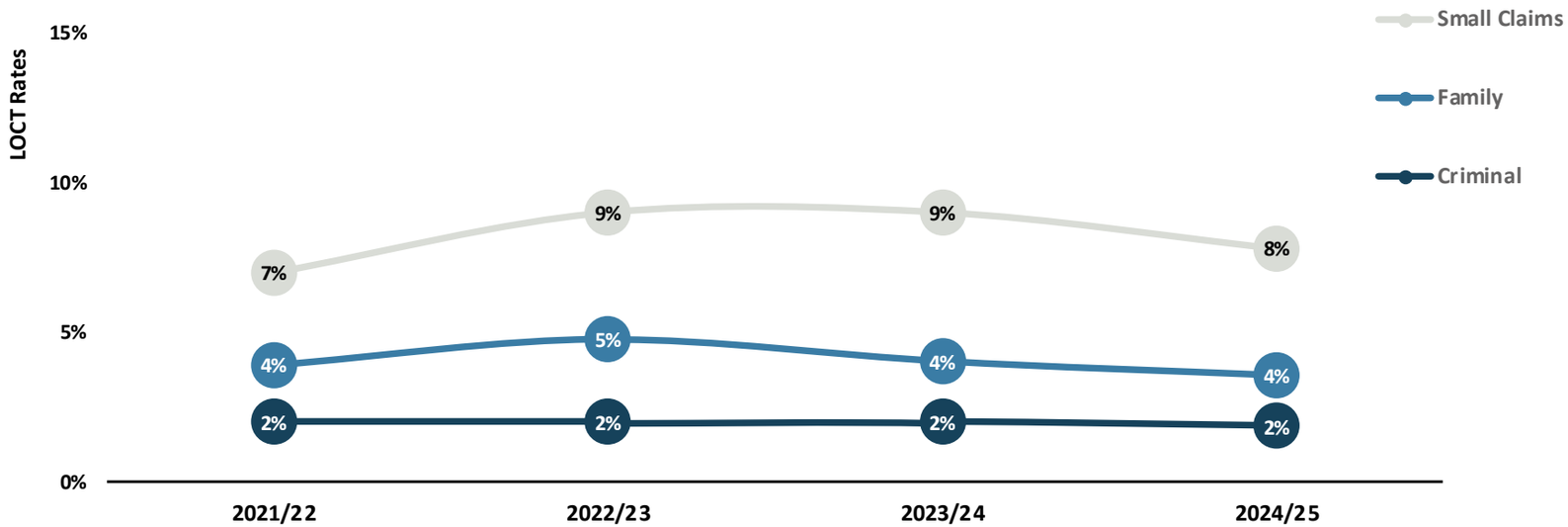
Over half of the small claims trials (60%) remaining on the list proceeded on the first day of trial. Figure 25 shows the distribution of collapse reasons in the small claims division.

Figure 25 - Collapse Rates of Small Claims Trials by Collapse Reason, 2024/25



Lack of court time (LOCT) rates capture the percentage of trials adjourned because the Court did not have sufficient judicial resources to hear a given trial on the day it was scheduled to begin. LOCT rates for all divisions have remained stable. The four-year trends for each division are shown in Figure 26.

Figure 26 - Lack of Court Time Rates by Division, 2021/22 – 2024/25



Regional roundup

Fraser region

The Court's Fraser region includes courts in Port Coquitlam, New Westminster, Surrey, Abbotsford, and Chilliwack that deal with cases in surrounding municipalities and rural areas between White Rock and Hope and from Maple Ridge to the US border.

Evaluation of the Early Resolution Process (ERP) in family court cases in Surrey showed it has had a positive impact. Judges look forward to its implementation throughout the Fraser region In April 2025, making it available to more families, including those whose first language is not English.

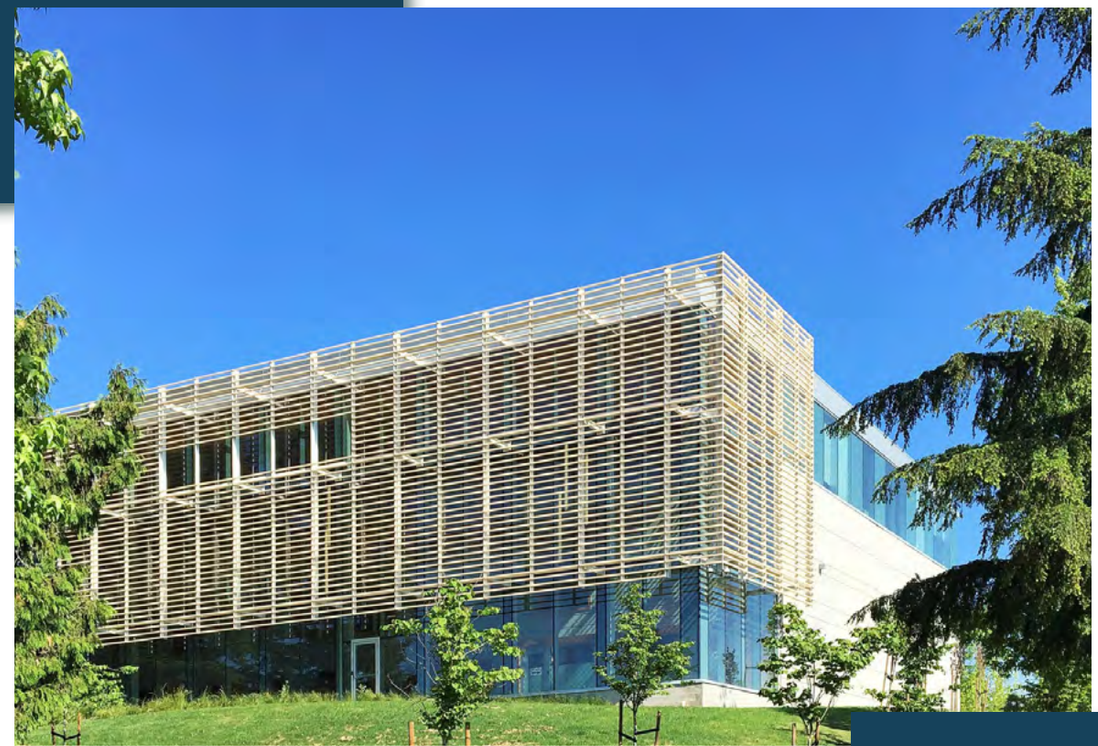
Bail hearings for the five courts in the region are conducted remotely by video conference from three "hub" courts. Expansion of virtual bail hearings has provided more timely access to justice, efficient hearings, and less movement of accused persons.

Throughout the year judges in the region volunteer to speak to school classes and community groups, as well as teach at law schools. They also contribute to legal education by participating in the Surrey Inns of Court and programs organized by Continuing Legal Education BC and bar associations.

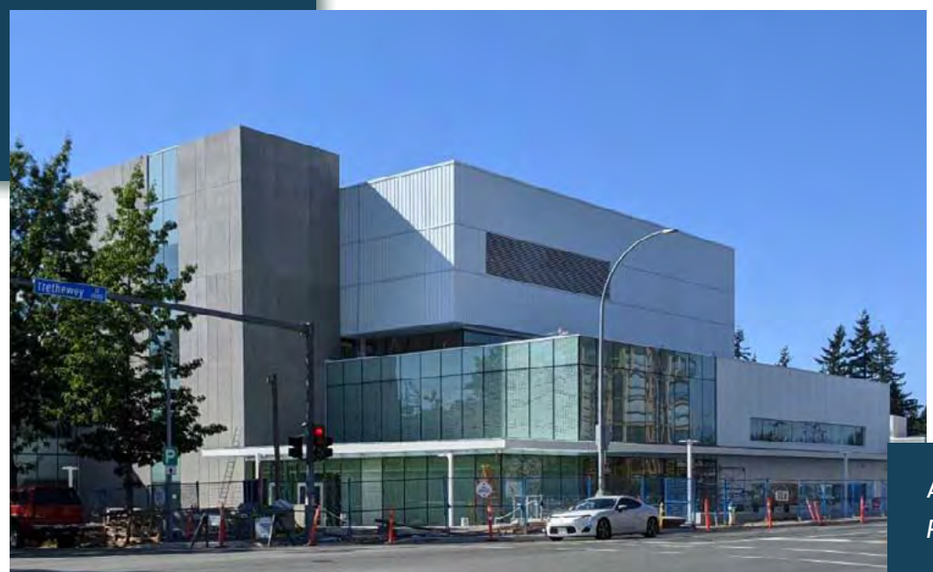
Port Coquitlam Courthouse
Photo: Mahnaz Ghulamnabi

In January 2025, the Justice Education Society collaborated with Surrey Courthouse staff to host the inaugural "Future in Justice" event. Judges participated in the program, designed to empower marginalized or racialized young women and gender-fluid and nonbinary youth and connect them with opportunities in the legal field.

One young participant remarked, "This event helped me gauge my interest in the justice field and all the opportunities available to me. As a student unsure of what career to pursue, all of the resources and mentors available through this event were incredibly helpful."



Surrey Courthouse



Abbotsford Courthouse
Photo: Alvin Lau

Financial report

The Court has made significant investments in technology to improve access to justice. In fall 2024, the Court launched its new user-centered website designed to better meet the information needs of court users and the public.

The Court also concluded the procurement process for the development of a computerized judicial desktop tool and began developing it in 2024. This tool will provide judges with access to all the digital resources they need through a single application. It will enable them to work effectively in all types of court appearances, and to prepare using digital court files.

Recognizing the increased use of technology in its workflow, the Court provided additional training and resources to help judicial officers use existing technologies efficiently and effectively. Throughout the fiscal year, the Court also focused on upgrading the IT/Systems infrastructure and enhancing its security.

Ongoing professional education for judges and judicial justices remains a priority. In-person education conferences in 2024 enabled judicial officers to build skills, understand legislative changes, and explore emerging issues.

The Court completed the fiscal year with a balanced budget through savings in operating expenses, including travel savings from investments in virtual courts. Figure 27 provides an overview of the budget allocated to the Court, the actual expenses incurred, and authorized cost recoveries.

Nakusp Courthouse

Figure 27 - Statement of Operating Expenses – Fiscal Year 2024/25

Description	Estimates Budget	Other Authorizations (12)	Total Budget	Actual Expenses	Variance	% Variance	Notes
Salaries	$60,456,000	$1,207,614	$61,663,614	$61,944,999	-$281,385	-0.46%	(1)
Supplemental Salaries	$50,000		$50,000	$144,772	-$94,772	-189.54%	(2)
Benefits	$15,516,000	$306,734	$15,822,734	$15,937,307	-$114,573	-0.72%	(1, 2)
Total Salaries and Benefits	$76,022,000	$1,514,348	$77,536,348	$78,027,078	-$490,730	-0.63%	
Judicial Council Fees & Exp	$36,000		$36,000	$29,639	$6,361	17.67%	(3)
Judicial Justices Fees & Exp	$5,122,000		$5,122,000	$4,570,220	$551,780	10.77%	(3,4)
Travel	$1,921,000		$1,921,000	$1,515,164	$405,836	21.13%	(5)
Professional Services	$303,000		$303,000	$404,598	-$101,598	-33.53%	(6)
IT/Systems	$898,000	$3,500	$901,500	$2,119,101	-$1,217,601	-135.06%	(7)
Office Expenses	$1,308,000		$1,308,000	$1,523,394	-$215,394	-16.47%	(8)
Supplies - Jud'l Attire	$109,000		$109,000	$110,039	-$1,039	-0.95%	
Vehicle Expenses	$60,000		$60,000	$76,711	-$16,711	-27.85%	
Amortization	$605,000		$605,000	$287,975	$317,025	52.40%	(9)
Renovations and Rent	$275,000		$275,000	$159,803	$115,197	41.89%	(10)
Transfers - CAPCJ, CCCJ	$12,000		$12,000	$17,200	-$5,200	-43.33%	(11)
Total Operating Expenses	**$10,649,000**		**$10,652,500**	**$10,813,844**	-$161,344	-1.51%	
Recoveries - Internal	-$1,000		-$1,000	-$654,268	$653,268		(12)
Recoveries - External	-$1,000		-$1,000		-$1,000		
Grand Total	**$86,669,000**	**$1,517,848**	**$88,186,848**	**$88,186,654**	**$194**	0.00%	

Notes

(1) Pressures due to compensation adjustments not funded by Government, which are partly offset by savings resulting from staffing and judicial appointment delays.

(2) Pressures due to increased benefits in the fiscal year.

(3) The public accounts present the budget for Judicial Council fees and expenses and judicial justices' fees and expenses together as one line item. Actual expenditures for the Judicial Council are presented separately here for greater clarity.

(4) Temporary surplus due to unallocated part-time judicial justice resource in the fiscal year.

(5) Travel savings resulting from Court Modernization and virtual assignments. Travel expenses are increasing year over year due to increasing costs of flights, car rentals, and hotels required for court travel.

(6) One-time professional consulting engagement to analyze resourcing.

(7) Increasing IM/IT costs due to one-time projects including website refresh, infrastructure updates, and consulting and development expenses for judges' digital tool, in addition to ongoing operating expenses to support virtual courts (e.g. Adobe licenses for digital workflows) and enhance security that were not funded.

(8) Increasing cost of office expenses due to inflation, including higher cost of in-person education conferences and professional development.

(9) Variance due to timing of capital asset additions.

(10) Facilities projects delayed or deferred due to resource availability.

(11) Transfers to the Canadian Council of Chief Judges (CCCJ) totalled $10,000 and to the Canadian Association of Provincial Court Judges (CAPCJ) $7,200. CAPCJ fees support education programs for new judges and CCCJ supports collaboration amongst Canadian chief judges on common issues.

(12) Recoveries from Ministry of Citizens' Services - Digital Investment Office for judges' digital tool capital project; offsets expenses recorded in IT/Systems account.

Complaints

Responding to complaints

The complaint process

Public confidence that judicial decisions are heard fully and made fairly is a foundation of our justice system. The Court's complaints process maintains that confidence by giving people the means to criticize judicial officers formally if they believe their conduct is inappropriate. Under the *Provincial Court Act*, all complaints about judicial officers are made in writing to the Chief Judge.

The *Act* establishes three stages to the judicial conduct complaints process: examination, investigation, and inquiry. If a complaint asserts conduct that could be judicial misconduct, it is examined by the Chief Judge or her designate. As part of this examination, the judicial officer who is the subject of the complaint is given a copy of the complaint and an opportunity to respond. The Chief Judge or her designate, after examining the complaint, any other relevant materials, and any response received from the judicial officer, may determine that:

- the complaint lacks merit;
- the complaint can be resolved through corrective or remedial measures; or
- an investigation is warranted.

The Chief Judge then advises the complainant and the judicial officer of the result of the examination.

Complaints examined in 2024

Each year, most of the complaints received are about decisions made by judges and judicial justices, rather than their conduct. These amount to appeals that must be made to an appeal court, not misconduct subject to review by the Chief Judge. In these cases, the complainants are sent appropriate information about appealing.

The Chief Judge also receives complaints about judges of other courts, lawyers, and others involved in the justice system. When a complaint does not involve a Provincial Court judicial officer, the complainant is referred to the appropriate agency or organization.

207 of 217 complaints received in 2024 were found not to be complaints within the authority of the Chief Judge, either because they amounted to appeals from decisions or because they concerned people outside the Court. These complainants were sent information about appealing or referred to the appropriate organization.

Ten complaints raised conduct issues and were scheduled for examination. In 2024 the Chief Judge completed examinations of four complaints about judicial officers: three about judges and one about a judicial justice. These complaint examinations are summarised in Appendix 1.

Each year some complaint submissions, particularly those received in the fourth quarter, are carried forward into the next year. Review of the remaining files will continue in 2025.

Figure 28 tracks complaint statistics and outcomes for the last decade. Since 2015, almost all complaints have been resolved at the examination stage.

Figure 28 – Complaints Statistics, 2015 - 2024[29]

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Complaints received	204	336	352	379	305	230	211	252	235	217
Appeals or no judicial misconduct found	164	313	335	370	288	215	192	233	198	177
Referrals[30] (those found not related to the Court and referred to another organization)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	15	30	29	30
Examinations of complaints performed to December 31, 2024	*19	*26	*16	*9	*13	*10	*2	*10	*6	*4
Investigations of complaints performed	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Files carried forward into 2025	23	7	16	5	9	8	5	10	4	7

29. A * indicates that an examination may have dealt with more than one correspondence from a complainant or more than one complaint about the same matter.

30. Matters that were found to not be related to the Court and in which the only action taken was to refer the complainant to another agency or organization. Prior to 2020, these were not distinctly captured and were counted as "Non-complaints".

Appendix 1: Complaint summaries

Complaints about judges

#	Summary
1	**Complaint:** The complaint arose from a small claims settlement conference. The complainant asserted that the judge yelled at them and would not let them speak. The complainant also asserted that they were not provided with enough time to present their case. **Review:** The complaint, in part, appeared to relate to some confusion about the purpose of a settlement conference. Its purpose is not for a full presentation of evidence. Settlement conferences are not normally audio recorded. With respect to the complainant's assertions about the judge's conduct, a response was sought from the judge. The judge provided a detailed response addressing the complainant's concerns. The judge indicated that they may have raised their voice during the settlement conference in response to the parties speaking over each other and to maintain control of the proceedings. The judge indicated that they did not intend for this to be rude and apologized if it was taken as such. Based on a review of the complaint and the judge's response, there was no basis to suggest any judicial misconduct by the judge. The complainant was provided with a reporting letter, a copy of which was also received by the judge, and the matter was closed on that basis.
2	**Complaint:** The complaint arose from a small claims settlement conference. The complainant asserted that the judge addressed them using a form of address that was sarcastic. The complainant also asserted that the judge spoke to them in a dismissive and patronizing manner and engaged in forceful conduct with them, contrary to the judge's conduct toward the opposing parties, which the complainant asserted was more favourable. **Review:** A response was sought and received from the judge. The judge submitted a detailed response that addressed the concerns in the complaint. The judge recalled the form of address they used when speaking to the complainant and stated that they meant no disrespect nor did the judge intend for the complainant to feel insulted or belittled in any way. The judge stated that they did not treat the complainant any differently from the opposing parties, indicating that they would have commented on both the claim and the reply in a fashion intended to encourage settlement. The judge denied the complainant's assertion that they engaged in forceful or bullying conduct. Settlement conferences are not normally audio recorded. Given the written court record and the judge's response, it could not be fairly concluded that the judge engaged in actions or comments that could be considered judicial misconduct. The complainant was informed of this in a reporting letter and the judge was provided with a copy of the letter. The matter was closed on that basis.

3	**Complaint:** A complaint was made about a judge's perceived connection to a group of lawyers. **Review:** A response was sought from the judge. The judge's response fully addressed the concerns set out in the complaint and disclosed no basis for judicial misconduct or further examination of the matter.

Complaints about judicial justices

#	Summary
1	**Complaint:** The complainant asserted that at a payment hearing in a small claims dispute, the judicial justice disregarded them when they tried to ask a procedural question. The complainant also asserted that the judicial justice made comments suggesting they would reach a particular decision should the matter be before them again, and that the judicial justice's conduct was not respectful to the complainant. **Review:** The audio recording of the hearing was reviewed and a response was sought from the judicial justice. In their response, the judicial justice acknowledged that they had intended to return to the complainant's procedural question but forgot to do so. The judicial justice apologized for not addressing the complainant's concern. Review of the audio recording indicated that the judicial justice made the comments alleged by the complainant about potential future disposition of the matter. Such comments, without having conducted a full hearing on the matter, gave the impression that the judicial justice would reach a particular decision if the matter came before them again. In addition, the judicial justice's tone was at times dismissive and inappropriate. Judicial officers are expected to act respectfully and impartially in all matters. Impartiality requires not only the absence of bias and prejudgment, but also the absence of any appearance of partiality. Following a review of the complaint and the judicial justice's response, remedial measures were undertaken to address the substantiated concerns raised in the complaint. It was also determined that the judicial justice would not have any further involvement with the complainant's court file. These steps, together with the judicial justice's reflection on the matter, served as a reminder to them of the ideals to which judicial officers aspire, and how their comments may be perceived by litigants and the public. The complainant was provided with a reporting letter, and the matter was closed on that basis.

Appendix 2: Time to trial definitions, weighting, and standards

Division specific time to trial definitions

Time to an adult criminal trial is defined as the number of months between an Arraignment Hearing/Fix Date[31] and the first available court date for typical trials of various lengths.

Time to trial for youth criminal trials is not broken down by trial length, but is otherwise the same. These results do not take into account the time between a first appearance in court and the Arraignment Hearing/Fix Date.

Time to a family trial is defined as the number of months between a conference and the first available court date for typical family (*FLA* and *CFCSA*) trials of various lengths. Results for time to a conference count from the fix date. The Court no longer tracks time to a fix date, as this event is primarily driven by factors unrelated to court scheduling.

Time to a small claims trial is defined as the number of months between a settlement conference and the first available court date for typical small claims trials of various lengths. These results do not take into account the time between the filing of a reply and the settlement conference. Results for settlement conferences count from the date of the reply.

Weighted time to trial calculations

Time to trial information is collected at the location level. It is then weighted using each location's caseload. This is done at both the regional and the provincial level. For example, if a location has 50% of its region's caseload and 11% of the provincial caseload in a given division, their results are multiplied by 0.5 during the calculation of the regional weighted time to trial, and by 0.11 when calculating provincial weighted time to trial.

Penticton Courthouse
Photo: Judge Jung

31. Sometimes a trial date is set at the conclusion of the arraignment hearing. Alternatively, a lawyer may rquest a "Fix Date" appearance and set a trial date at that time.

Standards

The current standards came into effect on June 30, 2016 and were developed based on the changes to the estimated trial length categories.

The Court now collects information on three different lengths of trial - less than two days, two to four days, and five or more days - in addition to Summary Proceedings Court[32] matters and conferences. The precise information collected varies based on division (e.g. no conference information is collected for criminal matters). Time to trial data is collected by surveying judicial case managers, who report when events of various types can typically be scheduled.

32. In seven of the Court's busiest locations, Summary Proceedings Courts conduct trials, hearings, or dispositions set for less than half a day.

Figure 29 - Time to Trial Measures and Standards

Jurisdiction	Measures and Standards	
	Measure	OCJ Standard
Small Claims	Settlement Conference	2 months
	Summary Proceedings Court (SPC)	4 months
	<2 Day Trial (non-Assignment Court locations)	5 months
	2-4 Day Trial	6 months
	5 Days or More Trial	8 months
Family (*CFCSA*)	Family Case Conference (FCC)	2 months
	SPC	2 months
	<2 Day Trial (non-Assignment Court locations)	3 months
	2-4 Day Trial	4 months
	5 Days or More Trial	6 months
Family (*FLA*)	Family Management Conference (FMC)	1 month
	Family Settlement Conference (FSC)	2 months
	SPC	3 months
	<2 Day Trial (non-Assignment Court locations)	4 months
	2-4 Day Trial	5 months
	5 Days or More Trial	6 months
Criminal	SPC	4 months
	<2 Day Trial (non-Assignment Court locations)	6 months
	2-4 Day Trial	7 months
	5 Days or More Trial	8 months
	Youth Trial	4 months

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