

Launched in 2010, CourtWatch gathers information about the courts through observation and research, and the data collected is used to inform the justice system's response to sexual violence.

## CourtWatch Monitors

CourtWatch engages community volunteers to observe proceedings in King County Superior Court. Since the program's inception, **132 volunteers have donated over 7,500 hours to monitor nearly 1,800 proceedings.** Based on their observations, we have formally recommended improvements to the court to enhance procedural justice by providing consistency and clarity about what is expected of participants.

## Judicial Feedback

68% of King County Superior Court judges receive feedback from CourtWatch. This feedback consists of monitors' observations about courtroom decorum, accessibility, and treatment of the parties involved.

## Legislative Change

- ✓ In 2013 CourtWatch participated in improving the Sexual Assault Protection Order (SAPO) process by amending the statute to include alternative means of service ([HB 1307](#), [SB 5175](#)). Previously, respondents had to be personally served with notice of the hearing, often resulting in cases being dismissed or victims dropping out of the process.
- ✓ During the 2015 and 2016 legislative sessions ([HB 2033](#), [SB 6151](#)) we advocated to change the SAPO process to make it consistent with other Washington protection orders on the issues of duration and burden of proof.

## Reports & Resources

- ✓ CourtWatch played a leadership role in writing and editing significant portions of Washington's [Sexual Offense Bench Guide for Judges](#) (2013)
- ✓ *Court Monitoring to Enhance System Accountability in Sexual Assault Cases* ([Sexual Assault Report](#), October 2012)
- ✓ [Analyzing the Impact and Application of the Sexual Assault Protection Order in King County](#) (CourtWatch Report, 2011)
- ✓ Compiled [case summaries](#) for cases resolved in 2015 to provide information about how sex offense cases progress through King County's criminal justice system
- ✓ [At-a-glance Sheets](#) detailing the statistics of sex offense cases in King County Superior Court (2011-2014) and SAPOs (2010-Q2 2015).

## Trainings

- ✓ Partnered with the Washington State Supreme Court Gender & Justice Commission to develop and deliver the *Enhancing Courts' Response to Adult Victim Sexual Violence Workshop* to judicial officers in both Eastern and Western Washington (2015)
- ✓ Presented at the End Violence Against Women International Conference and Children's Justice Conference on "Court Monitoring to Enhance System Accountability" (2014)
- ✓ Presented at Superior Court Judges' and Administrators' Conference on "Sexual Assault Protection Orders" (2013)

## What's next?

KCSARC has been awarded a three-year, \$500,000 grant from the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. This award funds an expansion of CourtWatch to engage more volunteers and gather more information about the courts, to increase outreach to criminal justice stakeholders, and to analyze gaps and to work toward implementing system improvements. One new initiative made possible by this grant is implementation of WordWatch, a project that will look at the language used to characterize sexual violence within the courts.