

THE EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

STATE OF COLORADO

Overview

January 2020

Population and Geographic Area

With an estimated district population of 1,327,271, the Courts of the Eighteenth Judicial District serve the most populated judicial district in Colorado. The District population includes Arapahoe County, the state's third largest, with a total population of 651,215 and unincorporated population of 83,764; Douglas County has a total population of 358,000 and unincorporated population estimate of 202,400, Elbert County with a population of 26,282, and Lincoln County with a population of 5,610.

Arapahoe County, Colorado's first county and third most populated in the state, spans 805 square miles and contains much of the southern and eastern suburbs of the Denver metropolitan area. It has an urban concentration, consisting in part of the municipalities of Aurora, Centennial, Englewood, Greenwood Village, and Littleton. It also contains rural communities east of the metropolitan area such as Byers, Deer Trail, and Strasburg. Arapahoe County is home to some of the nation's largest companies, including high tech, communication, military, service and retail industries.

Douglas County contains a heavy south metropolitan area suburban population. Ninety-one percent of the population lives in urban areas which is 17.5% of the county land area. Nine percent of the population lives in rural areas which is 82.5% of the county land area. The county includes the towns of Castle Rock, Castle Pines, Franktown, Larkspur, Lone Tree, Parker, and Sedalia, and the major subdivisions of Highlands Ranch and Acres Green. The remainder of the county is rural. The 2018 housing growth rate was 3.5%.

Elbert and Lincoln Counties are primarily rural. Some of the communities in Elbert County are Elizabeth, Kiowa, Ponderosa Park and Simla. Elbert County is the 21st most populated county in the state out of 64 counties.

Communities in Lincoln County include Hugo and Limon. The county is shaped like a backward L, which is 72 miles long and 48 miles wide throughout most of it. Lincoln county land area covers 2,593 square miles. A state prison is located near Limon in Lincoln County.

The Eighteenth Judicial District provides court services from five different courthouses in the district: Littleton and Centennial in Arapahoe County, Castle Rock in Douglas County, Kiowa in Elbert County, and Hugo in Lincoln County.

Case Filings and Docket Assignments

In FY 2019, 32,025 new cases were filed in the district courts. There were 74,474 new cases filed in the county courts during this period. There were 307 trials in the District Courts and 500 trials in the County Courts.

District court cases include felony criminal matters, civil cases, domestic relations cases, juvenile matters, appeals from municipal and county courts, and probate and mental health cases. County court cases include misdemeanors, traffic cases, civil cases of value up to \$25,000, small claims cases, and preliminary hearings in felony cases. The District has twenty-three district court judges and nine magistrates who currently hear district court cases. Sixteen of the district court judges and seven of the magistrates sit in

Arapahoe District Court. Five district court judges and two magistrates sit in Castle Rock and hear Douglas County cases. One judge hears Elbert County cases as well as Lincoln County Civil, Probate and Mental Health cases. One judge splits time between Lincoln County (hearing criminal, domestic relations and juvenile cases) and Douglas County (hearing domestic relations cases).

In the 18 Judicial District, the majority of district court judges and magistrates are assigned to specialized dockets. This means they are assigned to hear one or two case types. For example, some judges hear primarily domestic relations cases while others hear primarily criminal cases. However, to make the most efficient use of courtrooms and judicial officer time, the judicial officers pick-up cases of any case type from others whenever their time allows. A cooperative system of docket management allows our very busy District to move cases along more efficiently than we otherwise could.

There are thirteen judges and three magistrates in the county courts. One judge and one magistrate sit in Littleton, and six judges and one magistrate sit at the Arapahoe County Justice Center. Three judges and one magistrate sit in Douglas County; one part-time judge sits in Elbert County; and one part-time judge sits in Lincoln County.

In addition to the regular court dockets, the 18th Judicial District has four adult and one juvenile Problem Solving Courts. Problem Solving Courts offer a non-traditional approach to integrating treatment provision and criminal justice case processing. These courts rely on the close collaboration of multidisciplinary teams, including members from the judicial and treatment communities. Our Problem Solving Courts focus on reducing recidivism, promoting public safety, ensuring participant accountability, supporting recovery, and improving quality of life for participants and their families with a cost effective and community-based continuum of care. The 18th Judicial Veterans Court serves veterans who are struggling with trauma-related issues including, but not limited to, PTSD, TBI, substance use, and other mental health issues, with a focus on those issues that are directly related to military service. The Veterans Court has two tracks, with the Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) serving high risk/high need clients and the Veterans Support Court (VSC) serving low risk/high needs clients. The 18th Judicial District Recovery Court (RC) serves clients who are struggling on probation and are substance dependent. The RC is a probation revocation model, accepting referrals from probation officers and defense counsel. The Wellness Court of the 18th Judicial District (WC) serves clients who are struggling with co-occurring severe and persistent mental health symptoms and severe substance use disorders. The Sobriety Court of the 18th Judicial District (SC) provides comprehensive, multi-disciplinary responses to high-risk, high-need Felony DUI offenders. We also have a dedicated Truancy Court that has been helping keep students in the classroom for several years. It has been met with a great deal of success.

The judicial officers in the Eighteenth Judicial District carry heavy caseloads. In some court locations, alternative dispute resolution options such as mediation, settlement planning, and settlement conferences are offered to assist the public in resolving disputes.

Staff

The judges and magistrates are supported by approximately 230 trial court employees consisting of administrative staff, judicial assistants (both in the clerk's offices and the division), jury office personnel, law clerks, and court reporters; to mention a few. The district employs an additional 154 staff in the probation department.

Probation

In FY 2018, the probation department conducted 758 adult and juvenile offender investigations and prepared pre-sentence, assessment, screening, drug screen, or other reports after those investigations. The department also did 2,247 alcohol evaluations. The department received 5,630 new cases for probation supervision, 1,169 of which were referred to private probation and terminated 4,106 from state probation with an additional 1,700 terminated from private probation. As of July 30, 2019, there were 11,267 active adult and juvenile cases being supervised in the district including those cases supervised by the private provider.

All courts are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on regular business days. The Clerk's Offices in Arapahoe and Douglas Counties are open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on regular business days. The Clerk's Offices in Lincoln and Elbert Counties are open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on regular business days. Most court proceedings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. For further information or to plan a court visit, please contact Shaun Clark, Court Executive, 7325 South Potomac Street, Centennial, Colorado 80112, telephone (303) 645-6770, or Chief Judge Michelle Amico, telephone (303) 645-6625.