

**THE EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
STATE OF COLORADO**

**Overview**

**January 2017**

**Population and Geographic Area**

With an estimated district population of 963,164, the Courts of the Eighteenth District serve the most populated judicial district in Colorado. The District population includes Arapahoe County (618,821), Douglas County (314,638), Elbert County (24,195), and Lincoln County (5,510). For several years, Douglas County and Elbert County have been included as some of the fastest growing counties in the United States. This high growth in population has placed tremendous pressure on the courts to meet increasing demands for judicial services.

Arapahoe County 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.

Douglas County contains a heavy south metropolitan area suburban population. The county includes the towns of Castle Rock, Franktown, Larkspur, Lone Tree, Parker, and Sedalia, and the major subdivisions of Highlands Ranch and Acres Green. The remainder of the county is rural.

Elbert and Lincoln Counties are primarily rural. The major communities in Elbert County are Elizabeth and Kiowa, and in Lincoln County, they are Hugo and Limon. 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 2016, 31,645 new cases were filed in the district courts. There were 75,252 new cases filed in the county courts during this period. There were 287 trials in the District Courts and 528 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 \$15,000, 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 (although one magistrate hears cases in Littleton due to a lack of space at the Arapahoe County Justice Center). Six district court judges and two magistrates sit in Castle Rock and hear Douglas County cases. One judge covers the majority of the cases in both Lincoln and Elbert Counties. One of the judges who sits primarily in Douglas County, also hears some of the Elbert County cases.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> 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. Two judges sit in Littleton, and six judges and two magistrates sit at the Arapahoe County Justice Center. Three judges sit in Douglas County; one part-time judge sits in Elbert County; and one part-time judge sits in Lincoln County. One magistrate splits time between Douglas County Courts and Arapahoe District Domestic Relations (DR). His DR docket is heard in the Littleton courthouse due to lack of space at the Arapahoe County Justice Center.

In addition to the regular court dockets, the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District has several problem-solving courts. The 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Problem Solving Courts, in collaboration with several agencies, have developed multiple programs to address the growing needs of persons with substance dependence and mental health disorders within the criminal justice system. 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, integrated continuum of care through community resources. Our Adult Mental Health Court (Wellness Court) has been ground breaking in program structure and the services provided: housing, transportation, intensive case management, contingency management and individualized treatment plans. The Wellness Court has been in operation for over six years and it has experienced a great deal of success. Our Adult Drug Court (Recovery Court) began accepting clients in November of 2011. Modeled after well-established and successful drug courts, this court includes the newest research-based approaches, and we anticipate quantifiable success for this program. Our Truancy Court has been helping keep students in the classroom for several years. It has been met with a great deal of success. In 2013, we began accepting cases in our Veteran's Court. The 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District is committed to bringing proven and cost-effective approaches to the criminal justice system.

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 201 trial court employees consisting of administrative staff, judicial assistants, and court reporters. The district employs an additional 160 staff in the probation department.

### **Probation**

In FY 2016, the probation department conducted 785 adult and juvenile offender investigations and prepared pre-sentence, assessment, screening, drug screen, or other reports after those investigations. The department also did 3,573 alcohol evaluations. The department received 6,331 new cases for probation supervision and terminated 6,737. As of June 30, 2016, there were 12,625 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 Laurie McKager, District Administrator, 7325 South Potomac Street, Centennial, Colorado 80112, telephone (303) 649-6380, or Chief Judge Carlos Samour, telephone 303-649-6332.