

## THE EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

### STATE OF COLORADO

#### Overview

January 2024

#### Population and Geographic Area

With an estimated district population of 1,369,711, the Courts of the Eighteenth Judicial District serve the most populated judicial district in Colorado. The District population includes Arapahoe County, with a population of 655,808 and home to 36,513 veterans; Douglas County with a population of 375,988 and home to 20,712 veterans; Elbert County with a total population of 28,007 and home to 2,388 veterans, and Lincoln County with a total population of 5,986 and home to 292 veterans.

Arapahoe County, Colorado's first county as its origins antedate the Pike's Peak Gold Rush and the 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 is the 48<sup>th</sup> largest county in Colorado. 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 was named in honor of U.S. Senator Stephen A. Douglas. It is located between Denver and Colorado Springs. Douglas County is approximately 843 square miles, of which 63,037 acres are permanently protected land through the Douglas County Open Space Program. Recreational areas include more than 146,000 acres of Pike National Forest, Roxborough State Park, Castlewood Canyon State Park, and the Chatfield State Recreation 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. In 2021 Douglas County was named the 2<sup>nd</sup> healthiest county in America, according to the 2021 Healthy Communities rankings by U.S. News and World Report, released in collaboration with the [Aetna Foundation](#). Douglas County was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation in 2020 and in 2018. The County topped the annual list in 2019.

Elbert County is primarily rural. The County is approximately 1,851 square miles with Five Public School Districts and three community colleges. Some of the communities in Elbert County are Elizabeth, Kiowa, Ponderosa Park, Matheson and Simla. Elbert has 30 miles of Union Pacific rail lines. Elbert County Industries include Agriculture, Renewable Energy, Oil and Gas and Manufacturing. Both Denver and Colorado Springs lie within 50 miles. Elbert County is the 21<sup>st</sup> most populated county in the state out of 64 counties.

Lincoln County was formed in 1889 from parts of Elbert and Bent Counties. Lincoln County communities 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 is approximately 2,593 square miles of rolling prairie with river valleys and sand hills. Cattlemen came to the area in the late 1860s, and then followed by sheep growers as late as 1900. The earliest homesteads were claimed in the 1880s, with land seekers continuing to move onto government lands in this area over the next several decades. A state prison is located near Limon in Lincoln County.

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

### **Case Filings and Docket Assignments**

In FY 2023, 24,287 new cases were filed in the district courts. There were 66,085 new cases filed in the county courts during this period. There were 224 trials in the District Courts and 349 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-four district court judges and nine magistrates who currently hear district court cases. Sixteen of the district court judges and six of the magistrates sit in Arapahoe District Court. Six district court judges and two magistrates sit in Castle Rock and hear Douglas County cases. One judge hears Elbert County cases. One judge splits time between Lincoln County (hearing criminal, civil, domestic relations and juvenile cases) and Douglas County (hearing probate and mental health 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 four 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 and two magistrates 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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-need clients. The 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Recovery Court (RC) serves clients who are struggling with severe substance use disorders. The Wellness Court of the 18<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

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, legal research attorneys, and court reporters; to mention a few. The district employs an additional 142 staff in the probation department.

### **Probation**

In FY 2022, the probation department conducted 718 adult and juvenile offender investigations and prepared pre-sentence, assessment, screening, drug screen, or other reports after those investigations. The department also did 1,824 alcohol evaluations. The department received 5,151 new cases for probation supervision, 665 of which were referred to private probation and terminated 3,821 from state probation with an additional 1,150 terminated from private probation. As of June 30, 2022, there were 9,097 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 Jenni Turnidge, Court Executive, 7325 South Potomac Street, Centennial, Colorado 80112, telephone (303) 645-6771, or Chief Judge Michelle Amico, telephone (303) 645-6625.