



Washington State Patrol

**DRUG CONVICTION
COURT ORDER
PROCESSING
BACKLOG REPORT**

June 2023

Executive Summary

Washington State Patrol (WSP) is required under Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5693 to provide a report that describes any continued staffing needs to process the backlog of court orders and dispositions due to the February 25, 2021, Supreme Court ruling of State v. Blake.

Current Progress

Our Drug Conviction Correction Unit (DCCU) continues to experience a backlog and high volume of incoming court orders and dispositions.

In the last 11 months since the previous Decision Package Blake Continuance Update, the unit has received over 75,572 Blake court orders and dispositions (averaging 6,870 monthly).

Since August 2022, the newly established unit has processed 79,661 court orders and dispositions (averaging about 7,241 documents each month).

As of June 21, 2023, the State v. Blake backlogged items consist of the following:

- Court orders – 13 days / 1,179 documents
- Electronic dispositions – 9 days / 5,040 documents

As of June 23, 2023, \$381,225 of the \$441,000 allotted in FY23 for the court order disposition backlog has been spent. This amount only includes some charges since June has yet to close. DCCU currently has staffed (4) fully trained Correctional Records Technicians (CRT), (1) fully trained Management Analyst 3 Lead, and (1) Management Analyst 5 Supervisor with the anticipation of two of the fully trained Correctional Records Technicians positions becoming vacant in July of 2023. We also anticipate onboarding two new Correctional Records Technicians to fill the currently vacant positions in July with up to a 6-month training period. The two anticipated position vacancies in July must be recruited, hired, and trained.

According to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), an expected workload will increase due to the recent passing of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5187. Prior convictions for simple drug possession, including cannabis and possession of paraphernalia, are now included explicitly as causes to be vacated by cities.

Continued Needs

Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5187 provided WSP with a one-time appropriation of \$1,962,000 in the 2023-25 biennium to assist in processing the vacation of criminal records in accordance with the State v. Blake ruling. This funding will allow us to provide complete and accurate criminal history record information (CHRI) to our stakeholders. Updating this information in criminal history ensures public background checks are accurate and provides the benefit of the State v. Blake ruling to the citizens of Washington.

Based on feedback from AOC, we expect the increased workload to continue into the 2025-27 biennium. As a result, we plan to submit a 2025-27 Decision Package requesting continued funding.