

# IMPROVING TIME TO FACT-FINDING

## Child Dependency Courts



The fact-finding hearing on the petition shall be held no later than **seventy-five days** after the filing of the petition, unless exceptional reasons for a continuance are found.

[RCW 13.34.070\(1\)](#)

Use the [Dependency Dashboard \(Dash!\)](#) to see the average time to Fact-Finding for your court.

## Exceptional Circumstances



There is no legal definition of what constitutes an “exceptional circumstance” for continuing Fact-Finding. Whether or not to grant a continuance based on exceptional circumstances is at the discretion of the judicial officer.

Judicial officers should consider the statutory timeline requirement and the individual facts of the case when determining whether a circumstance is considered exceptional for the purpose of continuing Fact-Finding.

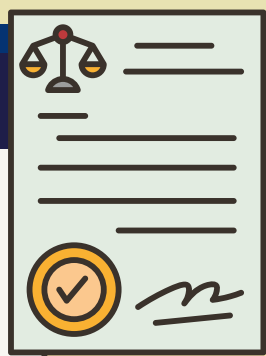


**New Court Codes for Exceptional Circumstances**

The purpose of these codes is to track data to better understand general trends and patterns of courts continuing fact-finding

These codes DO NOT suggest that the circumstances listed automatically rise to the level of “exceptional”.

Circumstance	Code	Description
Discovery	DEX	Discovery related circumstance
ICWA	IEX	ICWA related circumstance
Court Availability	CEX	Court resource or calendaring issue related circumstance
Party Availability	PEX	A party to the dependency case is unavailable for trial or fact-finding hearing by the 75th day
Lawyer Availability	LEX	A lawyer to the dependency case is unavailable for trial or fact-finding hearing by the 75th day
Pre-Dependency Engagement	EEX	Exceptional circumstance is found for the parent’s engagement
Other	OEX	Other general compelling circumstance



### In re Dependency of B.B.B.

*Filed August 29, 2024 | Washington State Supreme Court*

**Requires superior courts to hold review hearings every 30 days as long as a child is in shelter care.**

[Learn More](#)