

## Are bankruptcy filings increasing or decreasing?

This is a common question I receive. Are more people filing bankruptcy now or has it slowed down? The number of cases filed each month isn't a secret. The courts publish the number every month and they break it down by date, chapter and location.

For my district in Western Washington here are the numbers as listed on their website:

**United States Bankruptcy Court  
Western District of Washington  
Filing Statistics Analysis  
Calendar Year 2010 vs. 2011**

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Seattle</b>			<b>Tacoma</b>			<b>Total</b>		
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Chapter 7</b>									
January	764	815	6.68	551	607	10.16	1315	1422	8.14
February	982	906	(7.74)	658	561	(14.74)	1640	1467	(10.55)
March	1180	1226	3.90	931	862	(7.41)	2111	2088	(1.09)
April	1078	1175	9.00	819	711	(13.19)	1897	1886	(0.58)
May	978	1065	8.90	712	763	7.16	1690	1828	8.17
June	1031	1092	5.92	715	696	(2.66)	1746	1788	2.41
July	1084	960	(11.44)	775	661	(14.71)	1859	1621	(12.8)
August	1083	1083	0.00	698	678	(2.87)	1781	1761	(1.12)
September	1066	939	(11.91)	715	665	(6.99)	1781	1604	(9.94)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9246</b>	<b>9261</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>6574</b>	<b>6204</b>	<b>(5.63)</b>	<b>15820</b>	<b>15465</b>	<b>(2.24)</b>
<b>Chapter 13</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>%</b>
January	223	249	11.66	162	197	21.60	385	446	15.84
February	278	285	2.52	180	212	17.78	458	497	8.52

March	268	344	28.36	190	248	30.53	458	592	29.26
April	275	252	(8.36)	184	193	4.89	459	445	(3.05)
May	285	303	6.32	193	186	(3.63)	478	489	2.30
June	297	286	(3.7)	214	193	(9.81)	511	479	(6.26)
July	338	293	(13.31)	233	165	(29.18)	571	458	(19.79)
August	311	237	(23.79)	179	187	4.47	490	424	(13.47)
September	294	260	(11.56)	225	172	(23.56)	519	432	(16.76)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2569</b>	<b>2509</b>	<b>(2.34)</b>	<b>1760</b>	<b>1753</b>	<b>(0.4)</b>	<b>4329</b>	<b>4262</b>	<b>(1.55)</b>

As you can see the overall numbers for filings are down a small amount from 2010 to 2011 in the Seattle / Tacoma area. For the YTD in Seattle the Chapter 7 filings were 9246 in 2010 and now up just 15 more cases to 9261 2011. The filings for Tacoma and for chapter 13s were down a few percent.

The numbers can be interesting but everyone needs to do what is best for themselves. While filings seem to have slowed down a little I've talked to many people that are expecting a jump in filings as banks try to recoup losses from some of the foreclosures and other bad debts.