

Administrative Office of the Courts



2016 Supplemental Budget Development and Submittal Instructions

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Introduction

Although the economic environment has improved, we have a responsibility to submit a supplemental budget request that is sound and falls within the expectations of the legislature. Requests should be limited to non-discretionary changes in legally-mandated caseload or workload and, necessary technical corrections to the currently enacted budget.

With the exception of budget requests for the Judicial Conduct Commission, all state judicial branch budget requests, shall be subject to this process for final approval or endorsement by the Supreme Court as appropriate. The Supreme Court may approve, modify, suggest an alternative approach or deny funding proposals that are included in the AOC or Supreme Court budget requests. The Supreme Court may endorse and provide feedback regarding funding proposals brought forth by the independent judicial branch agencies.

Process Overview

Preliminary Budget Request Submission

Preliminary budget requests are short summaries of proposed requests. The purpose is to gain an understanding of the general nature and amount of proposed budget requests. Although the time horizon for the 2016 supplemental budget process is short, preliminary budget requests are required. Preliminary decision packages that impact AOC are due July 24, 2015 and those that do not impact AOC are due July 31, 2015. Additional information and forms can be found [here](#).

Detailed decision packages are due to the AOC on August 15, 2015. The AOC will compile and present the budget request information to the Supreme Court Budget Committee. The full Court will then endorse or suggest modifications to those budget requests that would not modify the AOC budget. For those requests that would modify the AOC budget, the full Court may approve, modify, suggest an alternative approach or deny each proposal. The finalized package will then be submitted to the Legislature in November.

Detailed Budget Request Documentation

The detailed decision package form and AOC contact information can be found in Appendices B and D respectively. The schedule can be found in Appendix A.

Detailed Decision Packages

Each decision package is a building block for constructing the budget request and the starting point for making a persuasive case for proposed change. The Supreme Court and Washington State Legislature will rely upon the information presented in the decision package when evaluating the request.

Decision packages organize and describe proposed cost changes, highlighting budget decisions and impacts. The decision package consolidates financial information, supporting justification, and the statement of impact for a specific action or policy proposed for inclusion in the budget.

Decision packages are required for any proposed change that will impact funding or staffing levels.

Please contact the Administrative Office of the Courts' Management Services Division if you have questions about decision packages. Contact information can be found in Appendix D.

Decision package writing tips

Items to consider or remember while developing a decision package include:

- **Consider your audience.**
When developing the decision package, remember that the Supreme Court and Washington State Legislature are the ultimate audiences to whom you are writing. Both will need clear and concise information, not only to make funding recommendations and decisions, but also to communicate the recommendations and decisions to others who can influence the process.
- **Use plain English.**
Jargon and acronyms should be avoided. The narrative should be clear to an audience that may not be familiar with the issue being discussed.
- **Use peer review.**
Ask others to read, review and critique the narrative. Often those not immersed in the issue can identify areas in the narrative that could be strengthened or eliminated.
- **Emphasize the results and outcomes.**
The Supreme Court and the legislature need to understand not only what is being purchased (goods and services) they also need to understand the benefits that will be derived.
- **The title of the decision package is part of the sales pitch.** Avoid titles like "*FTE Increase.*"
- **Graphs and tables may be useful.**
If a graph and/or table will add value, include it in the decision package.

- **Legislative staff has limited time; legislators have even less.**
The decision package should contain clear and concise language that addresses the issue, recommends a solution, and identifies the benefits.

The questions below should also be considered when developing a decision package

- What do you want the reader to know?
- What do you want the reader to retain?
- Does the narrative emphasize facts, statistics and sources that are respected?
- Does the narrative fully and thoroughly explain assumptions?
- Does the narrative include sufficient (but not too much) background and explanation?
- Is the narrative convincing?
- Is the proposed solution congruent with the agency's mission?
- Why will the public be better off as a result of the proposed solution?
- How will you know you are getting the benefits? Are the benefits measurable?
- Is there a non-budgetary way to deal with the problem? Will changes to administrative policy, court rule or law suffice?
- Is the amount being requested too small?
- Is the problem currently visible to the public or policymakers? Are there newspaper articles, letters from the public, surveys or complaint tracking systems that can help support the proposal?
- Does the proposed solution address an urgent problem? How serious are the risks if action is not taken? Can existing fund sources be used or re-programmed to address the issue?
- Is the amount requested reasonable, considering the problem to be addressed? Are the details of what is being requested reasonable?
- Is there a way to accomplish it without adding FTEs?
- What is the economic outlook?

A sample decision package can be found in Appendix C.

Judicial Branch Principle Policy Goals

The Judicial Branch Principle Policy Goals (Goals) noted below will be used to assess and prioritize budget requests submitted for consideration by the Washington Supreme Court. All budget requests should be linked to an overall direction or set of goals and objectives. Accordingly, the Goals are provided as anchor points for potential budget requests.

The Goals should be used as the guiding principles or strategic framework upon which the budget request is built. The budget request narrative should provide a clear picture of how the new or enhanced program or activity will directly enhance or move towards fulfillment of one or more of the Goals.

PRINCIPLE POLICY GOALS OF THE WASHINGTON STATE JUDICIAL BRANCH¹

“Justice in all cases shall be administered openly, and without unnecessary delay.”

Washington State Constitution, Article I, Section 10.

1. **Fair and Effective Administration of Justice in All Civil and Criminal Cases.** Washington courts will openly, fairly, efficiently and effectively administer justice in all criminal and civil cases, consistent with constitutional mandates and the judiciary’s duty to maintain the highest level of public trust and confidence in the courts.
2. **Accessibility.** Washington courts, court facilities and court systems will be open and accessible to all participants regardless of cultural, linguistic, ability-based or other characteristics that serve as access barriers.
3. **Access to Necessary Representation.** Constitutional and statutory guarantees of the right to counsel shall be effectively implemented. Litigants with important interest at stake in civil judicial proceedings should have meaningful access to counsel.
4. **Commitment to Effective Court Management.** Washington courts will employ and maintain systems and practices that enhance effective court management.
5. **Appropriate Staffing and Support.** Washington courts will be appropriately staffed and effectively managed, and court personnel, court managers and court systems will be effectively supported.

Measures

Measurement--whether considering output, outcome or performance--is an important tool that decision makers use when weighing the priority and impact of a proposed budgetary change.

The decision package template contains a section for the inclusion of measurement information. Every effort should be made to quantify the change that would occur as a result of new or increased funding.

¹ Approved En Banc June 5, 2008

Measures should illustrate how the budget request would impact statewide strategies or objectives and allow the reader or decision maker to easily understand the direct impact of the funding request on statewide objectives or strategies.

A good measure:

- Indicates whether the activity is achieving its purpose or is contributing to statewide results.
- Is reliable, accurate, and verifiable.
- Is understandable and relevant to decision makers and stakeholders who may have little or no knowledge of the new or enhanced activity.
- Is stated in positive terms (or in terms of the desired outcome).
- Can be obtained at a reasonable cost and effort.
- Can stand alone and be understood.

Comparison of Outcome, Output and Efficiency Measures

What They Do	Examples
Outcome Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show the impact of new or enhanced activities on problems/issues they are designed to address • Answer the question “What is different about the world?” • Capture societal impact, changes in behavior, knowledge or attitude, customer satisfaction, or technical quality, or vital signs of a process • Measure goals and objective attainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall employment rate • Employment rate for job training participants • Percentage of employers rating job training program placements as “good” or “excellent” • Percentage of children who get a communicable disease that is preventable by vaccination • Job training application processing time
Output Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show how much more or less of something was produced • Answer the question “What was done?” and “How did we get there?” • Measure success of strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of vehicle licenses issued • Number of vaccinations given • Number of students attending school • Number of offenders housed in correctional facilities
Efficiency or Effectiveness (Process) Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show relationship between inputs and outputs (efficiency measures), or inputs and outcomes (effectiveness measures) • Answer the question, “What are the unit costs?” • Can also be used to track timeliness of service delivery • Usually expressed as a ratio, such as cost per unit, or units per FTE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per training class delivered • Investigations per FTE • Average cost per offender per day supervised • Administrative cost per retirement benefit provided • Time to process a permit

Definitions

Recommendation Summary - A brief description of the purpose of a decision package. Text should be limited to a 100 words or less.

Appropriation — A legal authorization to make expenditures and incur obligations for specific purposes from a specific account over a specific time period. Appropriations typically limit expenditures to a specific amount and purpose within a fiscal year or biennial timeframe. Only the Legislature can make appropriations in Washington State.

Biennialization — Converting expenditures that occurred for only part of a biennium into the amount needed for a full biennium of implementation.

Biennium—A two-year fiscal period. The Washington State biennium runs from July 1 of an odd-numbered year to June 30 of the next odd-numbered year.

Budget Drivers — Caseload, economic, or demographic factors that have a significant effect on the state budget. Examples include inflation rate changes and state population changes in certain age groups.

Efficiency Measure — A measure that shows the relationship between inputs (dollars or FTEs) to output or outcome.

Funds — A term that generally refers to moneys or resources.

Fund Balance — Fund balance represents the excess of beginning balance and estimated revenues for the period over liabilities, reserves, and appropriations for the period.

General Fund-State (GF-S) — Refers to the basic account that receives revenue from Washington’s sales, property, business and occupation, and other general taxes; and is spent for operations such as public schools, social services, and corrections.

Objectives — Measurable targets that describe specific results a service or program is expected to accomplish within a given time period.

Outcome Measure — A measure of the result of a service provided. This type of measure indicates the impact on the problem or issue the service or program was designed to achieve.

Output Measure — An indicator of how much work has been completed.

Performance Measure — A quantitative indicator that can be used to determine whether the activity is achieving or making progress toward some objective.

Proviso — Language in budget bills that places a condition on the use of appropriations. Example: “Up to \$500,000 of the General Fund-State appropriation is provided solely for five additional inspectors in the food safety program.”

Strategic Plan — A long-term comprehensive plan that represents an integrated set of decisions and actions designed to ensure that the intended goals and objectives of an agency are met.

Appendix A

2016 Budget

Development, Review and Submittal Schedule

June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015-2017 biennial budget approved by legislature. • June 19, 2015 present schedule to BJA. • June 26, 2015 present schedule to JISC. • June 30, 2015 distribute 2016 supplemental budget instructions.
July
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop decision packages. • July 24, 2015 preliminary decision packages <u>that impact AOC</u> are due. Preliminary requests must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief description • Brief description of benefit to be gained • Estimated dollar amount and staffing need (FTE) • July 31, 2015 preliminary decision packages <u>that do not impact AOC</u> are due. • Supreme Court Budget Committee meeting.
August
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final decision packages due August 15, 2015 • August 21, 2015 summary of 2016 supplemental budget request distributed at BJA meeting for discussion. • August 28, 2015 summary of 2016 JIS supplemental budget request distributed at JISC meeting. • Supreme Court Budget Committee meeting.
September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 16, 2015 revenue forecast • September 18, 2015 BJA makes recommendation regarding 2016 supplemental budget requests that impact AOC. • Supreme Court Budget Committee meeting.
October
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supreme Court Budget Committee meeting. • October 23, 2015 JISC makes recommendation regarding 2016 JIS supplemental budget request. Recommendation communicated to Supreme Court Budget Cmte. • The recommendations of the Supreme Court Budget Committee are forwarded to the full court for review and approval at the November En Banc Conference.
November
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 4, 2015 2016 supplemental budget presented for approval at the En Banc Conference. • The final branch supplemental budget request is forwarded to the Legislature.

Appendix B-Templates

Detailed Decision Package Template (Packages are due to AOC August 15, 2015)

[Judicial Branch 2016 Supplemental Budget Request Submission Form](#)

Send detailed decision package(s) to Ramsey Radwan at ramsey.radwan@courts.wa.gov

Appendix C-Decision Package Example

Example Decision Package

[Example Dec Package](#)

Appendix D-Contact Information

Administrative Office of the Courts Management Services Division

For assistance with the development of the preliminary budget submission, detailed decision package narrative and cost figures, or questions regarding process or procedure, please contact:

- Mai Vu – Budget
(360) 705-5237
Mai.Vu@courts.wa.gov
- Renee Lewis – Comptroller
(360) 704-4012
Renee.Lewis@Courts.wa.gov
- Ramsey Radwan – Director, Management Services Division
(360) 357-2406
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