

# **Administrative Office of the Courts**



## **2017-2019 Biennium Budget Development And Submittal Instructions**

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# Introduction

In December 2007, the Washington Supreme Court officially adopted the first budget development and approval schedule for the judicial branch. During the fall of 2011 the Chief Justice called on judicial branch leaders to revisit, refine and strengthen the judicial branch budget process. The process was modified to include additional review points and thus ensure wider branch participation.

The process was further modified in 2013. The Board for Judicial Administration (BJA) established four new or reconstituted standing committees in order to provide additional transparency and inclusion in policy, legislative and budget matters. Of the four standing committees, the Budget and Funding Committee has the primary responsibility of reviewing and making recommendations regarding annual or biennial budget requests. Specifically, the Budget and Funding Committee is responsible for:

- Coordinating efforts to achieve adequate, stable and long-term funding of Washington's courts to provide equal justice throughout the state, and
- Reviewing, recommending and prioritizing budget requests routed through the BJA that impact the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).

The purpose of the schedule and the associated procedures remains the same: to ensure that the budget development, review and submittal process is consistent, transparent and objective, providing several opportunities for review and discussion.

As we endeavor to maintain and even grow the Judicial Branch resource base, the use of a number of review and assessment processes becomes imperative, especially during times of economic stress or slight economic recovery, as is currently happening. Accordingly, we continue to strengthen our budget process by enhancing transparency and inviting input to ensure the development of funding requests that more closely align with judicial branch policy objectives and priorities.

While revenue collections have somewhat stabilized and overall revenue is projected to grow, there remain a number of risk factors that could adversely impact Washington's economy and associated revenue. As of the February 2016 forecast the economic risk factors include a slowing global economy and the strengthening of the U.S. dollar. In addition, the current budget outlook projects a \$700 million budget deficit by the end of the 2017-2019 biennium, excluding additional costs for mental health and K-12 education. Because of these and other factors, our budget submittal must be thoughtful and driven by priorities that benefit the public first and the branch second.

With the exception of budget requests for the Judicial Conduct Commission, all state judicial branch budget requests, whether for new funding or increases to existing funding, shall be presented to the Supreme Court Budget Committee for approval, modification, endorsement or transmittal 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

The budget process has been slightly modified due to the creation of the BJA Budget and Funding Committee. Previously preliminary budget requests were required. In order to provide additional time, preliminary budget requests are no longer required. Instead final draft detailed budget decision packages are required.

In addition, the Budget and Funding Committee will review and make prioritization recommendations to the BJA the previous step whereby proponents presented their requests to the BJA has been eliminated. However, the presentation to the Supreme Court Budget Committee remains intact.

## **All detailed budget decision packages are due to AOC on April 6, 2016.**

The Administrative Office of the Courts' Management Services Division (MSD) will provide stakeholders assistance as needed, review budget decision packages and, prepare them for submission. MSD staff will also prepare presentations and advise the Budget and Funding Committee, the Supreme Court Budget Committee and the Supreme Court en banc.

## **Detailed Budget Request Documentation**

The AOC will compile budget requests received and submit them to the Budget and Funding Committee (Committee) for review, vetting and prioritization. In order to assist entities that request funding, the BJA has approved a set of criteria that the Committee will use to rate and prioritize budget requests.

The Committee will review all budget requests during April and May 2016 and will forward priority recommendations to the BJA. In June, the BJA will accept or modify the Committee's recommendations and forward to the Supreme Court Budget Committee.

In order to provide the additional information, requesting entities will be invited to attend and present their requests to the Supreme Court Budget Committee. The presentation meetings will be scheduled in **July 2016**. Detailed information will be distributed at a later date.

The Supreme Court Budget Committee will use input from BJA, the current and projected economic outlook, the Budget and Funding Committee criteria, and the policy objectives as the context for evaluating the detailed budget decision packages as well as evaluating the proposed judicial branch budget submittal as a whole.

A recommendation for the final content of the 2017-2019 biennial budget request will be submitted by the Budget Committee to the full Court in late September. 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 October.

The Judicial Branch Principle Policy Objectives and the BJA Budget and Funding Committee Criteria can be found in Appendices D and E respectively.

# 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 F**.

The template for the detailed Decision Package can be found in **Appendix B**.

## 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**.

## 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.

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

## 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

## 2017-2019 Budget Development, Review and Submittal Schedule

MONTH	TASK	DUE DATE
January 2016	AOC distributes budget instructions	
February 2016	AOC staff assist with budget request development	TBD
March 2016	Budget Instruction letter from Chief Justice distributed	
April 2016	<b><u>Draft budget requests are due to AOC</u></b> Requests must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of request</li> <li>• Description of benefit to be gained</li> <li>• Dollar amount and staffing</li> </ul>	April 6, 2016
April 2016	JISC review IT budget requests	April 20, 2016
April-May 2016	BJA Budget and Funding Committee evaluate requests based upon criteria	April 6-May 13, 2016
May 2016	<b><u>Final budget requests are due to AOC</u></b> Add'l information for the Budget and Funding Committee	May 2, 2016
May 2016	Supreme Court Budget Committee Briefing	TBD
May 2016	BJA Budget and Funding Committee present recommended priorities to BJA for discussion	May 20, 2016
June 2016	Supreme Court Budget Committee Briefing	TBD
June 2016	BJA makes recommendation to Supreme Court Budget Committee	June 17, 2016
June 2016	JISC approves 2017-2019 IT budget request	June 24, 2016
June 2016	Final date budget requests can be modified (minor modifications only)	June 30, 2016
July 2016	Supreme Court Budget Committee Briefing/Presentation-all budget requests	TBD
July 2016	Supreme Court Budget Committee meeting	TBD
August 2016	Supreme Court Budget Committee meeting Supreme Court Budget Committee makes recommendation to full court	TBD Aug. 31, 2016
September 2016	Supreme Court En Banc: final approval & submission to Legislature	Sept. 28, 2016

BJA Meeting Schedule	JISC Meeting Schedule	Revenue Forecast Schedule
May 20, 2016	April 22, 2016	N/A
June 17, 2016	June 24, 2016	June 15, 2016
August 19, 2016	August 26, 2016	N/A
September 16, 2016	October 28, 2016	September 21, 2016
November 18, 2016	December 2, 2016	November 16, 2016
December 16, 2016	N/A	N/A

# Appendix B-Templates

Detailed Decision Package Template can be found at:

<http://www.courts.wa.gov/content/Financial%20Services/documents/2017/detailedDPTemplate.pdf>

**All detailed/final decision packages are due to AOC April 6, 2016**

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

# Appendix C-Decision Package Example

Example Decision Package

<http://www.courts.wa.gov/content/Financial%20Services/documents/2017/sampleDecisionPacket.pdf>

# Appendix D

## 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 BRANCH<sup>1</sup>

*“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.

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<sup>1</sup> Approved En Banc June 5, 2008

# Appendix E

## Board for Judicial Administration Budget and Funding Committee Criteria

The Budget and Funding Standing Committee (BFC) of the Board for Judicial Administration is responsible for reviewing, making recommendations, and initially prioritizing budget requests submitted to the BJA. The following criteria will be used by the BFC to evaluate budget proposals submitted to the BJA.

### **Mandatory Criteria**

- The budget request is for an activity essential to a constitutional, statutory or court rule mandate.
- The budget request is necessary to carry out the Principal Policy Goals of the Washington State Judicial Branch
  - Fair and Effective Administration of Justice in all Civil and Criminal Cases
  - Accessibility
  - Access to Necessary Representation
  - Effective Court Management
  - Appropriate Staffing and Support.
- The budget request implements a resolution adopted by the BJA.

### **Additional Criteria**

- The budget request provides a complete and detailed description of the justification for the request, written in plain language so that an outside reader will understand the problem and the proposed solution. The request will include the following elements.
  - A description of the funding requested supported by empirical data.
  - Specifically identified outcomes.
  - Organizations and groups that support the request.
  - The impact if not funded.
- The request is an innovative approach or a more effective means of addressing a mandate or the principal policy goals, and includes a description of the justification and proposed empirical evaluation criteria.
- The budget request builds on or enhances existing and ongoing efforts and seeks to achieve more cost-effective outcomes.
- The request is designed to mitigate or eliminate structural or systemic funding problems.

# Appendix F-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](mailto:Mai.Vu@courts.wa.gov)
- Renee Lewis – Comptroller  
(360) 704-4012  
[Renee.Lewis@Courts.wa.gov](mailto:Renee.Lewis@Courts.wa.gov)
- Ramsey Radwan – Director, Management Services Division  
(360) 357-2406  
[Ramsey.Radwan@Courts.wa.gov](mailto:Ramsey.Radwan@Courts.wa.gov)