

Washington State Judicial Branch

2025-27 Biennial Budget Request Cover Sheet

Submitting Organization: **Assn of WA Courts**

Topic Area: Support Trial Courts

Submitting Author: **Riley Parker, President**

Priority (# of X): **3 of 7**

Title: **Pilot Puppies in Courts**

Summary: **The Association of WA Courts (AWAC) requests \$4 million in funding and 3.0 FTEs at the Administrative Office of the Courts to test a pilot program of utilizing puppies in courthouses and courtrooms. Peer-reviewed research shows that the presence of puppies increases dopamine levels in people that are close to or interact with them. We propose to pilot the utilization of puppies in court environments in order to improve the court experience for users of the court system.**

Estimated Cost: **\$4 million / 4.0 FTEs**

How was the priority of this request determined as compared to your organization's other requests?

While AWAC has a number of requests, this request was determined to be our third most important as it has a direct and immediate impact for both employees of and users of the court system. Our higher priority requests align with this impact while our lower priority requests have a less direct impact on court users and more of an indirect impact affecting the court system overall.

Is anyone outside your organization involved? **Yes, there are often other elected officials' offices within courthouses and the WA State Puppy Commission has discussed this proposal with us in the past. The WA Humane Society will likely also be involved regarding puppy care standards.**

If yes: Have you discussed this request with them? **Yes – officials from county and municipal associations have indicated support; the Puppy Commission is supportive; the Humane Society is concerned about levels of care and unintended consequences of increasing puppy supply pipelines in Washington.**

Does this request create work for anyone else? (such as AOC) **Yes, the Administrative Office of the Courts would need staffing to implement the pilot programs statewide; court clerks and administrators would be implementing the pilot programs at the court level.**

If yes: Have you spoken to the agency? What was their response? **Yes – AOC's support is contingent on staffing being provided to implement; clerks and administrators are supportive so long as it remains an optional program in the future and not become an unfunded mandate.**

If not the author, with whom should AOC Budget Staff work with if there are additional questions or concerns? **AOC Budget Staff should work with either the author or AOC staff that support the association (such as Nova Cameron)**