

Washington State Judicial Branch 2015-2017 BIENNIAL BUDGET REQUEST

Decision Package

Agency	Supreme Court
Decision Package Title	Reinstatement of Merit Increments
Budget Period	2015-2017 Biennial Budget
Budget Level	Maintenance Level

Agency Recommendation Summary Text

The Supreme Court requests funding to reinstate salary step increases for eligible employees. Staff salaries were frozen six years ago as part of the austerity measures necessitated by severe budget reductions. Employees did not advance to the next salary step within their salary ranges, as is customary for state employees.

Fiscal Detail

Operating Expenditures	FY 2016	FY 2017	Total
001-1 General Fund State	\$ 64,000	\$ 64,000	\$ 128,000
Staffing	FY 2016	FY 2017	Total
FTEs (number of staff requested)	0	0	0

Package Description

In order to achieve reductions totaling 17% of its budget, the Supreme Court was forced to eliminate salary step increases for current employees.

There are approximately 55 employees at the Supreme Court, including the commissioner, staff attorneys, security officer, judicial assistants, and court clerk. Those employees who are at the top of their salary ranges are not eligible for further step increases. This request seeks to provide step increases for those employees who are not yet at the top of their salary ranges

and who are eligible for step increases, but who did not receive increases due to the budget reductions implemented by the Supreme Court.

Allowing each of these eligible employees to receive a step increase on the next Periodic Increment Date (PID) would begin the process of bringing them to the salary they should be receiving based on their tenure in the job class. Restoring step increases would assist in the retention of these skilled employees.

Narrative Justification and Impact Statement

This package contributes to the Judicial Branch Principle Policy Objectives as identified below.

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.*

Supreme Court staff salaries were frozen the past six years to enable the Court to operate on a severely reduced budget. The affected employees have continued to carry out their duties despite the fact that they did not receive step increases as they were earned. Restoring the Court's ability to provide step increases to eligible employees will ensure that court personnel are effectively supported.

Measure Detail

Impact on clients and service

None

Impact on other state services

None

Relationship to Capital Budget

None

Required changes to existing Court Rule, Court Order, RCW, WAC, contract, or plan

None

Alternatives explored

Although increases have been frozen for some time, Supreme Court staff cannot be expected to serve indefinitely without receiving the merit increments they have earned.

Distinction between one-time and ongoing costs and budget impacts in future biennia

These are ongoing costs.

Effects of non-funding

It will be difficult to recruit and retain qualified employees if merit increments cannot be provided.

Expenditure calculations and assumptions and FTE assumptions

Object Detail	FY 2016	FY 2017	Total
Staff Costs	\$ 64,000	\$ 64,000	\$ 128,000
Non-Staff Costs	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Total Objects	\$ 64,000	\$ 64,000	\$ 128,000