

BOARD FOR JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

PROCESS AND GUIDELINES FOR RESOLUTION REQUESTS

The Board for Judicial Administration (BJA) was established to adopt policies and provide strategic leadership for the courts at large, enabling the Washington State judiciary to speak with one voice. To fulfill these objectives, the BJA may consider adopting resolutions on substantive topics relating to the administration of justice in accordance with the Principal Policy Goals of the Washington Judicial Branch:

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.

In order to help ensure timely and thorough consideration of proposed resolutions, the BJA has established these guidelines regarding procedure, form and content. Care must also be taken not to dilute the importance of resolutions by adopting too many or without proper consideration.

Resolution requests may be initiated by BJA members or by outside parties. The requestor shall submit the resolution, in writing, with a request form containing a brief statement of purpose and explanation, to the BJA Associate Director.

The Associate Director shall refer properly submitted resolutions to appropriate AOC staff, and/or to an appropriate standing committee (or committees) for

review and recommendation, or directly to the BJA's Executive Committee, as appropriate. Review by the BJA's Executive Committee will precede review by the full BJA membership. Such review may be done via e-mail communication rather than in-person discussion when practical. Resolutions may be reviewed for style and content. Suggestions and comments will be reported back to the initiating requestor as appropriate.

Review should include discussion of priorities relative to existing strategic or long-range plans, whether resources are available to properly act upon the resolution, and any recommended language changes. Resolutions must be consistent with the Principal Policy Goals and long-range goals.

The report and recommendation of the Executive Committee shall be presented to the BJA membership at the next reasonably available meeting, at which time the resolution may be considered. Action on the proposed resolution will be taken in accordance with the BJA's rules and bylaws. The BJA may approve or reject proposed resolutions and may make substantive changes to the resolutions.

This process will ensure that (1) BJA members receive a written explanation of the resolution; (2) resolutions are screened in order to avoid last minute emergency debates and possible mistakes of fact or inaccurate statements; (3) when feasible, a thoughtful recommendation as to the resolution can be provided by the Executive Committee or a responsible committee; (4) a clear description is provided to requestors regarding how to proceed to obtain BJA consideration; and (5) a simple, expedited process exists, where time allows, for referral to the Executive Committee or other committee, followed by full membership consideration.

Resolutions should not be more than two pages in length. An appropriate balance must be struck between background information and a clear statement of action. Traditional resolution format should be followed. Resolutions should cover only a single subject unless there is a clear and specific reason to include more than one subject. Resolutions must be short-term, stated in precise language, and include a specific call to action. They are not long-term policy statements.

Resolutions must include a specific expiration date or will automatically expire in five years. Resolutions will not be automatically reviewed upon expiration of their term, but may be reviewed upon request for reauthorization. Resolutions may be terminated prior to their expiration date as determined by the BJA.

Approved resolutions will be numbered, maintained on the BJA section of the AOC website, and disseminated as determined by the BJA.