

# Washington State Judicial Branch

## 2023-25 Biennial Budget

### Implement 2021 Salary Survey

**Agency:** Court of Appeals

**Decision Package Code/Title:** C1 – Implement 2021 Salary Survey

**Agency Recommendation Summary Text:**

The Court of Appeals is seeking ongoing funding for implementation of salary increases based on the 2021 Compensation Survey of the Washington State Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and Administrative Office of the Courts. These increases will address pay disparities across all classifications as identified in the salary survey. (General Fund-State)

**Fiscal Summary:**

	FY 2024	FY 2025	Biennial	FY 2026	FY 2027	Biennial
<b>Staffing</b>						
FTEs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>						
Fund 001-1	\$663,200	\$663,200	\$1,326,400	\$663,200	\$663,200	\$1,326,400
<b>Total Expenditures</b>						
	\$663,200	\$663,200	\$1,326,400	\$663,200	\$663,200	\$1,326,400

**Package Description:**

The Court of Appeals is committed to providing fair, equitable and competitive compensation to all employees. The Administrative Office of the Courts recently commissioned a salary survey that found overall pay ranges to be 15% - 20% below market rate averages. The Court's Personnel Committee conducted an in-depth review of the salary survey and the current compensation for comparable court positions and made recommendations for implementation based on the findings.

The Court is proposing increases that address the pay disparities, close some large gaps and bring positions closer to the market averages. Hiring in certain classifications has been particularly challenging due, in part, to non-competitive salary ranges. These salary increases will ensure that the Court of Appeals is competitive in the job market and can hire and retain qualified employees in all job classifications.

**Fully describe and quantify expected impacts on state residents and specific populations served:**

The Court of Appeals has three divisions and handles approximately 3,000 cases per year from across the State of Washington. Parties may be represented by counsel or represent themselves. The staff provide both front line customer service as well as support to the judicial officers who are hearing and deciding cases. It is critical that the Court is able to hire and retain employees to provide these services to our customers and the community. Recruitment, retention and staff morale are crucial to maintaining the fair and effective administration of justice.

**Explain what alternatives were explored by the agency and why they were rejected as solutions:**

The Court endeavored to provide modest increases in the last biennium within its existing budget. However, those increases were not sufficient to address the disparities indicated in the 2021 Compensation Study and it is not possible

to absorb the necessary increases within our existing budget.

**What are the consequences of not funding this request?**

The Court will continue to struggle with attracting qualified applicants and may lose experienced employees to similar jobs that offer higher compensation.

**Is this an expansion or alteration of a current program or service?**

Not applicable

**Decision Package expenditure, FTE and revenue assumptions:**

Job Title/Classification	# of FTEs	Annual Increase
Judicial Administrative Assistant	22	108,800
Law Clerk	46	358,400
Senior Staff Attorney	3	28,200
Staff Attorney	8	80,800
Senior Case Manager	7	34,000
Case Manager	11	47,400
Receptionist/File Clerk	2	5,600
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>663,200</b>

Expenditures by Object		<u>FY 2024</u>	<u>FY 2025</u>	<u>FY 2026</u>	<u>FY 2027</u>	<u>FY 2028</u>	<u>FY 2029</u>
A	Salaries and Wages	559,700	559,700	559,700	559,700	559,700	559,700
B	Employee Benefits	103,500	103,500	103,500	103,500	103,500	103,500
<b>Total Objects</b>		<b>663,200</b>	<b>663,200</b>	<b>663,200</b>	<b>663,200</b>	<b>663,200</b>	<b>663,200</b>

**How does the package relate to the Judicial Branch principal policy objectives?**

This proposal supports all of the above policy objectives. The fair and effective administration of justice requires professional, skilled and knowledgeable staff support across the Court. Accessibility and access to necessary representation are services provided by the Court that rely on being efficient, effective and fully staffed. A guiding principle of effective court management is hiring, retaining, and supporting the staff who are the lifeblood of the organization. Sufficient staffing and support are achieved by commissioning salary surveys on a regular basis and implementing their well-researched and data-driven findings.

**Are there impacts to other governmental entities?**

No

**Stakeholder response:**

Not applicable

**Are there legal or administrative mandates that require this package to be funded?**

No

**Does current law need to be changed to successfully implement this package?**

No

**Are there impacts to state facilities?**

No

**Are there other supporting materials that strengthen the case for this request?**

Per the *Washington State Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, And Administrative Office of the Courts 2021 Compensation Study* issued on June 30, 2021, the Summary of Findings stated:

Overall, the study found that Washington Courts' current pay ranges are about 15% to 20% below market in aggregate. While minimum (starting) pay rates are somewhat closer to the public sector market, the midpoints and maximum rates are notably below both the public and private sector markets. The standard range for market competitiveness is **90% to 110%** of the market average.

Among the three departments, we found that pay ranges for courts jobs (both Court of Appeals and Supreme Court) are further behind market than the AOC jobs. On average, the courts jobs are at least 20% below the overall market, while the AOC jobs are about 10% below. (The Segal Group, Inc., Pages 1-2)

**Are there information technology impacts?**

No

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