

Washington State Judicial Branch

2024 Supplemental Budget

Self-Help Center Technical Fix

Agency: Administrative Office of the Courts

Decision Package Code/Title: 1M – Self-Help Center Technical Fix

Agency Recommendation Summary Text:

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, the Legislature first appropriated \$520,000 to launch two self-help center pilot programs that offer assistance to unrepresented litigants with legal information in civil matters. In the 2023-25 biennial budget, the Legislature funded \$260,000 in each fiscal year to extend the programs. This funding request would make a technical correction to the 2023-25 appropriations, shifting all funding into FY 2024 to continue the two pilot programs at the current, FY 2023 funding level. (General Fund – State)

Fiscal Summary:

	FY 2024	FY 2025	Biennial	FY 2026	FY 2027	Biennial
Staffing						
FTEs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001-1	\$260,000	(\$260,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures						
	\$260,000	(\$260,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Package Description:

Funding for self-help centers was included in the Administrative Office of the Court's (AOC) 2023-25 enacted biennial budget. The Legislature funded a total of \$520,000 to pay the current, annual cost of the two pilot sites equaling \$260,000 each. However, the funding was split evenly between FY 2024 and FY 2025. This decision package seeks to correct that technical oversight and fund both pilot sites at the current, annual level in FY 2024 by shifting all \$520,000 into FY 2024.

Fully describe and quantify expected impacts on state residents.

The two self-help center pilot programs serve the public in distinct areas of the state, on the west and eastside. Unmet civil legal needs disproportionality impact low-income households, women, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, and communities of color.¹ Pilot sites are anticipated to serve approximately 150-200 area residents each month.

Explain what alternatives were explored by the agency and why this was the best option chosen.

No funding alternatives were explored. This request would make a technical correction to the fiscal year split so the pilot programs can continue at the current level in FY 2024.

What are the consequences of not funding this request?

Without this funding, the self-help center pilot programs that were launched in FY 2023 will be unable to fully implement their intended services in FY 2024.

¹ Impact of Self-Help Center Expansion in California Courts. Judicial Council of California. January 2021. Accessible at <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/lr-2021-self-help-centers-funding-analysis-BA-2018-gov-code-9795.pdf>

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

This would allow continuation of an existing grant program.

Decision Package expenditure, FTE and revenue assumptions:

This request would be a technical appropriation shift between fiscal years.

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>
C Personal Service Contract	260,000	(260,000)				

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

Not applicable, this is a technical correction.

Are there impacts to other governmental entities?

There are no anticipated direct impacts to governmental entities other than those courts with self-help pilot programs. The Superior Courts in Grays Harbor and Spokane have benefitted from the services offered by the pilot programs to unrepresented litigants. This technical correction allows the pilot programs to continue at the current level of funding in FY 2024.

Stakeholder response:

The most directly impacted group by this proposal are those members of the public that utilize the court for civil legal problems. Anecdotal reports from the pilot programs indicate that litigants welcome the services being provided, and support continued funding in FY 2024.

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

There is no mandate that requires the funding of this package.

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?

None

Are there information technology impacts?

No

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