

# Washington State Judicial Branch

## 2024 Supplemental Budget

### Align Juror Pay Pilot Funding with Implementation

**Agency:** Administrative Office of the Courts

**Decision Package Code/Title:** JB– Align Juror Pay Pilot Funding

**Agency Recommendation Summary Text:**

The Administrative Office of the Courts requests 1.0 FTE and \$169,000 in additional funding to shift the implementation of the Juror Pay Pilot Project to Fiscal Year 2025. The pilot project to increase juror pay was funded by the Legislature in the 2023-25 biennial budget with the goal to increase diversity in juries and increase access to justice for those on trial. However, the budget proviso limits juror pay to \$50 per day per juror and is not enough to incentivize participation or produce useful data. This request would fund staffing for two years, propose new proviso language raising juror pay to \$100 per day per juror, and make a technical correction shifting the pilot project funding for increased juror pay into FY 2025. (General Fund – State)

**Fiscal Summary:**

	FY 2024	FY 2025	Biennial	FY 2026	FY 2027	Biennial
<b>Staffing</b>						
FTEs	0.00	1.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>						
Fund 001-1	(\$1,400,000)	\$1,568,600	\$168,600	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Expenditures</b>						
	(\$1,400,000)	\$1,568,600	\$168,600	\$0	\$0	\$0

**Package Description:**

This request would shift the 2023-25 Juror Pay Pilot Project funding from FY 2024 to FY 2025 and increase the daily juror pay rate from \$50 to \$100. The enacted biennial budget (Chapter 475, Laws of 2023) allowed for increasing juror pay to \$50 per day per juror. However, after an initial review, the Jury Diversity Research Group and the pilot court, Pierce County Superior Court, do not believe a \$50 increase would be enough to incentivize individuals who make minimum wage to take unpaid time off of work to serve on a jury. An increase to \$50 per day per juror is not adequate compensation for someone who is making minimum wage (\$130 per day, assuming \$16.28 per hour for eight hours). The increase needs to be closer to the minimum wage, allowing them to serve on a jury while also keeping up with their expenses, as they would if working at their job. A higher daily compensation rate will lead to more reliable and meaningful data that will in turn show the effect that an increase to juror pay has on increasing diversity within juries.

**Fully describe and quantify expected impacts on state residents.**

An increase in jury diversity in Washington could affect any state resident who is participating in a jury trial, allowing for greater access to justice and equity in the courtroom.

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

Implementing the pilot project in FY 2024 would lead to insufficient or faulty data collection that does not accurately represent how an increase to juror pay could affect an overall increase to jury diversity in Washington. An increase to \$50 per day per juror is not adequate compensation for someone who is making minimum wage.

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

If this request is not funded, the lack of diversity in juries across Washington would continue with the known barrier of juror pay. This ultimately effects individuals' access to justice in the courts. Without reliable and meaningful data, there will be a lack of formal evidence to support a statewide, ongoing increase to juror pay.

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

This is an alteration of the juror pay pilot project that was funded in the 2023-25 biennial budget.

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

**Staffing Assumptions**

Court Program Analyst. Beginning July 1, 2024 one-time, AOC requires salary, benefits, and associated standard costs for 1.0 FTE to support the pilot project through the 2023-25 biennium. The staff will be responsible for marketing and outreach prior to the beginning of the pilot with existing funds and in FY 2025 for collecting, analyzing and reporting data about the outcomes of the pilot.

<b>Expenditures by Object</b>	<b><u>FY 2024</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2025</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2026</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2027</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2028</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2029</u></b>
A Salaries and Wages		98,100				
B Employee Benefits		30,000				
E Goods and Services		3,600				
G Travel		2,000				
J Capital Outlays		1,800				
N Grants, Benefits, and Client Services	(1,400,000)	1,400,000				
T Intra-Agency Reimbursements		33,100				
<b>Total Objects</b>	<b>(1,400,000)</b>	<b>1,568,600</b>				

**Staffing**

<b>Job Class</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b><u>FY 2024</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2025</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2026</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2027</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2028</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2029</u></b>
COURT PROGRAM ANALYST	98,100		1.00				
<b>Total FTEs</b>			<b>1.00</b>				

**Explanation of standard costs by object:**

Salary estimates are current biennium actual rates at Step L.

Benefits are the agency average of 30.59% of salaries.

Goods and Services are the agency average of \$3,600 per direct program FTE.

Travel is the agency average of \$2,000 per direct program FTE.

Ongoing Equipment is the agency average of \$1,800 per direct program FTE.

One-time IT Equipment is \$4,800 for the first fiscal year per direct program FTE.

Agency Indirect is calculated at a rate of 25.86% of direct program salaries and benefits.

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

*Fair and Effective Administration of Justice.* This is a pilot project with the goal of increasing juror pay statewide based on the data collected. Increasing juror pay may lead to increased diversity in jurors with greater access to justice for those on trial.

*Accessibility.* The goal is to increase access to jury service for those who are not compensated by their employers. This request would make jury service more accessible to those who may have barriers due to a lack of pay.

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

No.

**Stakeholder response:**

This request is supported by the Jury Diversity Workgroup, Minority & Justice Commission (MJC), Gender & Justice Commission (GJC), Office of Public Defense (OPD), Washington State Trial Court Lawyers (WSAJ), and Prosecuting Attorneys (WAPA).

**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. This is a pilot project. However, the proviso language would need to be amended in the 2024 supplemental budget.

~~\$160,000~~ ~~\$1,560,000~~ of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and ~~\$1,568,600~~ of the general fund – state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 is provided solely the office to administer a jury pay pilot program in Pierce county. Funding must be used to increase jury pay up to ~~\$50~~ 100 for each day served in Pierce county superior court. The funds provided in this subsection must supplement, and not supplant, existing local funding for juror pay. The office must compare juror demographics after the pay increase as compared to data collected from the 2022 jury demographic survey to measure the impact increasing juror pay has on jury diversity and juror response rates.

**Are there impacts to state facilities?**

No.

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

No.

**Are there information technology impacts?**

No.

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