

Washington State Judicial Branch 2025-27 Biennial Budget Targeted Salary Increases Based Upon 2024 Compensation Survey

Agency: Court of Appeals

Decision Package Code/Title: 1A – 2024 Compensation Survey

Agency Recommendation Summary Text:

The Court of Appeals is seeking funding for the implementation of salary increases based upon the 2024 Compensation Survey conducted by the Administrative Office of the Courts. These increases will address pay disparities for targeted below-market positions. The identified positions include administrative assistants, case managers, judicial administrative assistants, and senior case managers. (General Fund – State)

Fiscal Summary:

	FY 2026	FY 2027	Biennial	FY 2028	FY 2029	Biennial
Staffing						
FTEs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001-1	\$231,000	\$231,000	\$462,000	\$231,000	\$231,000	\$462,000
Total Expenditures						
	\$231,000	\$231,000	\$462,000	\$231,000	\$231,000	\$462,000

Package Description:

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) recently completed a compensation survey on behalf of the courts. As a result of the survey, the Court of Appeals (COA) Personnel Committee conducted an in-depth review of the salary survey, current compensation, and made recommendations for targeted salary increases to the COA Executive Committee (EC).

The EC adopted the following personnel committee recommendations to address pay disparities and bring specific positions closer to the market averages:

- Request ongoing biennium budget funds of \$462,000 for salary increases in the following positions: administrative assistants, case managers, senior case managers, and judicial administrative assistants.
- Move the noted position salary ranges upward by two steps on a step-for-step basis.

These salary increases will ensure that the Court of Appeals is competitive in the job market and can hire and retain qualified employees.

Fully describe and quantify expected impacts on state residents.

The Court of Appeals has three divisions and handles approximately 3,500 cases per year from across the State of Washington. Parties may be represented by counsel or represent themselves. The indicated 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 this was the best option chosen.

Current court budgets are not sufficient to address the disparities indicated in the 2024 Compensation Study for the indicated positions identified in this budget request.

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?

No.

Decision Package expenditure, FTE and revenue assumptions:

Job Title/Classification	# of FTEs	Annual Increase
Administrative Assistant	1.0	\$4,000
Administrative Assistant – Comm Office	3.0	\$16,000
Case Manager	12.0	\$53,000
Facilities/Senior Case Manager	1.0	\$6,000
Judicial Administrative Assistant	22.0	\$114,000
Senior Case Manager	7.0	\$38,000
TOTAL	46.0	\$231,000

Division	# of FTEs	Annual Increase
Division I	19.0	\$99,000
Division II	16.0	\$75,000
Division III	11.0	\$57,000
TOTAL	46.0	\$231,000

Expenditures by Object		<u>FY 2026</u>	<u>FY 2027</u>	<u>FY 2028</u>	<u>FY 2029</u>
A	Salaries and Wages	196,000	196,000	196,000	196,000
B	Employee Benefits	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
	Total Objects	231,000	231,000	231,000	231,000

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

Fair and Effective Administration of Justice

The fair and effective administration of justice requires professional, skilled, and knowledgeable staff support across the Court.

Accessibility

Accessibility is a service provided by the Court that relies on being efficient, effective, and fully staffed.

Access to Necessary Representation

Facilitating access to necessary representation is a service provided by the Court that relies on being efficient, effective, and fully staffed.

Commitment to Effective Court Management

The court strives to hire the most qualified individuals available to serve court users.

Sufficient Staffing and Support

Sufficient staffing and support are achieved by commissioning salary surveys on a regular basis and implementing their well-researched and data-driven findings.

How does the package impact equity in the state?

Address any target populations or communities that will benefit from this proposal.

This proposal will improve the court's ability to recruit and retain among diverse populations in the state.

Describe the how the agency conducted community outreach and engagement.

No additional outreach was conducted beyond the salary survey completed by the outside consultant.

**Consider which target populations or communities would be disproportionately impacted by this proposal.
Explain why and how these equity impacts will be mitigated.**

No negative impact anticipated.

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?

2024 compensation survey.

Are there information technology impacts?

No.

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