

The Supreme Court
State of Washington

DEBRA L. STEPHENS
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TEMPLE OF JUSTICE
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DATE: May 15, 2025

TO: Justice Barbara Madsen, Chair, JISC
Judge Alicia Burton, Member Chair, BJA
Judge Cindy Larsen, President, SCJA
Judge Karl Williams, President DMCJA
Judge Anne Cruser, Presiding Chief Judge, Court of Appeals
Judge Diana Ruff, Chair BJA Budget and Funding Committee
Judge Michael Scott, Chair BJA Policy and Action Committee
Judge Rebecca Glasgow, Chair BJA Legislative Committee
Judge Tam T. Bui, Chair BJA Court Education Committee
Judge Sean O'Donnell, Co-Chair BJA Court Security Committee
Suzanne Elsner, Co-Chair BJA Court Security Committee
Linnea Anderson, President, WAJCA
Jessica Humphreys, President, AWSA
Sunitha Anjilvel, President, WSBA
Susan Speiker, President, WSACC
Sara Robbins, Director, OCLA
Larry Jefferson Jr., Director, OPD
Reiko Callner, Executive Director, CJC
Esperanza Borboa, Chair, Access to Justice Board

FROM: Debra Stephens, Chief Justice

RE: 2026 Supplemental Budget Development and Submittal

It's time to begin the development of our branch's 2026 supplemental budget request. Last year's budget was difficult for our branch, as most of our top priorities were either not funded or funded far below our requested levels. We all know that the legislature continues to have a difficult task in the future to balance the state budget, but we will continue to advocate for adequate, long-term, stable funding.

Supplemental requests should be limited to technical corrections to the enacted budget or requests of *critical* and *immediate* concern. This contrasts with biennial budget requests which focus on new programs, new priorities, or increased funding for existing programs.

Please refer to the step-by-step calendar of the process as well as the decision package template and instructions that are attached. For packages that are proposed to be included in the budget request from the Administrative Office of the Courts, our budget development process requires that submission to AOC should come from one of the following individuals:

- Board/Committee Chair
- Association President
- Agency Director
- AOC Division Director

Budget requests are ultimately voted on by the Supreme Court, which considers a number of factors when deciding which decision packages to move forward to the legislature. These factors include priorities set by the Budget & Funding Committee (BFC), recommendations made by the BJA and JISC, the current and future economic environment, constitutional and statutory requirements, and other factors.

Budget requests concerning the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Office of Public Defense, and Office of Civil Legal Aid will be processed as they have in the past, with each entity approving their own request for inclusion in the branch submission.

Timelines are shorter than they appear, and we all have busy schedules. I encourage you to build an internal calendar that works backwards from due dates. Adherence to the attached timeline is necessary to ensure that the process remains consistent and objective, ensuring that all requests forwarded to the Legislature are sound and well-vetted.

The AOC Management Services Division will provide support for the development and submittal of the supplemental budget requests. All proposed decision packages (with completed template) are due by June 30. Please submit them to Christopher Stanley at Christopher.Stanley@courts.wa.gov.

The budget development schedule, the template to complete, as well as the instructions for completion can be found [by clicking this link](#).

I look forward to working with you all in the coming year. Thank you for your continued dedication to justice and your service to the residents of Washington. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at 360-357-2049 or call Christopher Stanley at (360) 357-2406.

Sincerely,



Debra L. Stephens, Chief Justice
Washington State Supreme Court

cc: Justices of the Supreme Court
Executive Committee, Court of Appeals
Dawn Marie Rubio, State Court Administrator
Christopher Stanley, Chief Financial and Management Officer, AOC
Sarah Pendleton, Supreme Court Clerk
Michael Johnston, Supreme Court Commissioner
Sam Thompson, Reporter of Decisions
Rob Mead, State Law Librarian