WASHINGTON STATE JUDICIAL BRANCH

2013-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET REQUEST

Detailed Decision Package

Agency: **Administrative Office of the Courts**

Decision Package Title: **Quality Assurance Consolidation – Juvenile Court**

Budget Period: **2013-2015 Biennial Budget Request**

Budget Level: **Policy Level**

Recommendation Summary Text

The request proposes the Quality Assurance (QA) coordinators and statewide QA structure be standardized, research-oriented, and managed by the Administrative Office of the Courts Washington State Center for Court Research.

Fiscal Detail

Operating Expenditures	FY 2014	FY 2015	Total
001-1 General Fund-State	$ 668,000	$ 668,000	$ 1,336,000
Staffing	**FY 2014**	**FY 2015**	**Total**
FTEs	5	5	5

Package Description

In previous years, the associations and AOC advocated for consolidation based on separation of powers and a clear vision for enhancements to the quality assurance, program evaluation, and reporting for court constituents and outside stakeholders. While that vision was clearly articulated, the actual plan on how to accomplish the improvements without additional state resources was not detailed. The proposal below, for the 2013 Legislative Session, clearly outlines the design of a QA system that is able to produce system enhancements. This request reflects the future demands on a QA system that can accommodate the increasing expectations of the current QA needs as well as future needs as additional evidence-based programs are implemented by juvenile courts.

As proposed, the redesigned QA system can expand to current programs shared by other agencies or additional programs identified for other populations. The list of approved programs (EBPs) used in juvenile court are shared with juvenile justice partners in Juvenile Rehabilitation, and possibly to other agencies as was the vision in last session's House Bill 2536. The refreshed vision and repurposing of staff will

strengthen the future of QA and provide improved services to all users of evidence-based programs.

The current system of Quality Assurance (QA) for juvenile assessment and programs is program-driven, leaving some commonality between QA oversight, but not enough to maximize efficiencies. Consolidating QA creates an expectation that all EBPs will be evaluated equally, based on standards, and regardless of what agency or vendor is conducting the QA oversight. The new design also allows growth and duplication into other areas of program evaluation, such as with other juvenile promising programs or services offered via the juvenile justice system.

In order to accomplish the revised vision within existing FTEs, the proposal is to consolidate the separate QA functions into a streamlined system that provides professional level quality standards across programs and functions while increasing court access to evaluation data. This proposal dedicates resources to improve and expand the role of QA to meet the increasing internal and external demand for reporting. The EBPs utilized by juvenile courts are shared with our juvenile justice partners at the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA). The courts and JRA have common interest in enhancing the system of QA and were directed by the Legislature in 2012 to review the system of QA and report back in December of 2012. The courts view the new QA system as a shared resource and allow connection of evaluation data system-wide.

Consolidation of the distinct QA functions will provide an organized, streamlined, and professional system of QA housed at the AOC within the Washington State Center for Court Research. The enhanced QA system will be based on standard principles to evaluate (1) assessment delivery and (2) Evidence Based Programs. The enhanced system of QA would be poised to apply evaluation standards to assessment and services delivered in the courts. This advancement will be a sustainable and valuable asset to stakeholders, policy makers, and funders alike. It will allow a strategy to evaluate cross system involved youth.

Narrative Justification and Impact Statement:

This package contributes to the Judicial Branch Principle Policy Objectives as noted below.

Fair and Effective Administration of Justice in All Civil and Criminal Cases. ***Washington courts will openly, fairly, efficiently and effectively administer justice in all criminal and civil cases, consistent with constitutional mandates and the judiciary's duty to maintain the highest level of public trust and confidence in the courts.***

The juvenile court offender management system is based on (1) assessment, (2) interventions, (3) case management that includes matching youth with appropriate interventions to reduce recidivism, and (4) outcome measurement. Each of these elements includes a role for Quality Assurance. If any of these elements are not functioning correctly, the court fails to maximize the use of state funds.

Accessibility. ***Washington courts, court facilities and court systems will be open and accessible to all participants regardless of cultural, linguistic, ability-based or other characteristics that serve as access barriers.***

The court proponents for this decision package believe the enhanced QA system will better meet the needs for multi-system youth, regardless of what system is responsible for their treatment. For example, a consolidated system would tie together youth who have a dependency case and are on probation. If a youth has been in a JRA institution, is released back in the community and fails to attend school a truancy petition is filed. Along with our ability to measure the impact of programs comes increased responsibility to ensure services are meeting the targeted goals.

Commitment to Effective Court Management. ***Washington courts will employ and maintain systems and practices that enhance effective court management.***

Each juvenile court in Washington employs a validated risk assessment tool, titled the Case Management Assessment Process (CMAP), to determine a youth risk level to re-offend as well as identifies primary areas of need or targeted areas for change that are most likely to impact a youth's future re-offending behavior. CMAP is a complete system of offender case management specifically designed to reduce future criminal activity resulting in recidivism. The juvenile courts have been committed to a system of offender management based on assessment, intervention, quality assurance, and outcome measurement. CMAP is a standardized court case management system designed to direct the level of supervision and match the best programs with youth risk factors to reduce reoffending behaviors.

Appropriate Staffing and Support*. Washington courts will be appropriately staffed and effectively managed, and court personnel, court managers and court systems will be effectively supported.*

One distinct highlight of the CMAP system of offender management in juvenile courts is the comprehensive system of quality assurance regarding the assessment, and programs offered to juveniles under the court's jurisdiction. The coordinator for CMAP is housed at the AOC, under the Washington State Center for Court Research, although funding for this position is authorized by the legislature and passed through the Department of Social and Health Services, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration.

The QA system is currently staffed in a disjointed way; however it meets the current needs of the system (assessment and programs). In light of the goal to expand a series of EBPs to other systems (i.e. Children's Administration and Mental Health) the number of programs is likely to expand as a result of the populations targeted for services. This vision was articulated in the 2012 House Bill 2536. While the final bill fell short of mandating that vision, a planning process is currently underway.

The proponents of this proposal strongly believe that expansion of EBPs must include equal QA presence as it does currently in juvenile courts. If the current system of QA is not built for sustainability and expansion, we run the risk of losing

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authority over QA for our programs and not being a model for other systems to structure themselves.

QA funding comes from the state allocation to juvenile courts that pass through DSHS-JRA. That money currently purchases in whole or in part the following FTE:

- CMAP Coordinator – QA Specialist and .5 FTE support staff
- Aggression Replacement Training – QA Specialist and consultant contracts
- Coordination of Services – QA Specialist
- Functional Family Therapy – QA Specialist and contract with FFT Inc.
- Oversight of contracts at JRA

The program research function and oversight of the assessment software is supported by the AOC-Center for Court Research via separate grant funding. Additionally, there are EBPs where the actual QA activities are done outside the court's QA. For example, FFT is one of the primary EBPs in juvenile court. FFT Inc. is the major provider for QA services with an on-site QA expert in coordinating Washington's FFT programs both in court and in JRA. Similarly, QA for FIT and Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) are managed by the University of Washington. The courts need an effective liaison to incorporate program outcomes back into the court-centered QA system, such as exists with FFT Inc. Articulating and implementing the QA liaison role represents a significant improvement to the QA structure.

The court structure welcomes more collaboration between the current system of CMAP and EBPs with other public policy providers who must replicate a similar system. The vision articulated in this proposal should be one shared by other public policy agencies or those who deliver services. As was directed in House Bill 2536, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy and the University of Washington's Evidence Based Practice Institute are to provide an inventory of EBPs and research-based practices. Next, the Department of Social and Health Services is to create a summary of who in child welfare, juvenile rehabilitation, and children's mental health is using what services and finally provide a report that uses monitoring and quality assurance to measure fidelity to the services, including QA. That said, the Legislature has adopted an aggressive timeframe to apply available funding to EBPs, or to a lesser standard, research-based programs. These public agencies will require QA support. The sooner the legislature provides direction and clarity to juvenile justice QA, for the courts and JRA, the more of an advantage other systems will have to use the shared resource. Without consolidation, the QA system will remain divided and unable to meet the demands of expansion, improvement, and duplication.

The proposal slightly repurposes the FTEs by assigning responsibilities more consistent with a model that is sustainable and can manage growth in the number of programs to evaluate.

<u>Measure detail</u>

Impact on clients and services

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Under the proposal to consolidate and redefine responsibilities and reporting, the juvenile courts will have significantly improved access to data, and program outcome information to gauge program effectiveness. The QA system first and foremost serves to inform the courts; probation staff, administrators and judges. Secondarily, the information accessible through improved reporting will better inform stakeholders and funders alike about what is working to reduce recidivism in the juvenile population. This kind of responsive data is particularly helpful for legislators who look to improve juvenile court and JRA as well as apply EBP standards to other systems such as Children's Administration and Mental Health Services.

Impact on other state programs

The consolidation of QA functions and specialists would technically result in a reduction to the JRA budget. Historically, JRA has opposed the consolidation, however programmatically the EBP services at JRA would receive the benefit of an improved QA system simultaneous with the juvenile courts. Particularly in light of the Legislature's acceleration toward EBP delivery, a healthy and streamlined QA and reporting system are more important than in previous years. If our system of QA does not consolidate, we are vulnerable to the role of QA splintering between many different agencies.

Relationship to Capital Budget

None.

Required changes to existing Court Rule, Court Order, RCW, WAC, contract, or plan

If consolidated, the AOC would not contract with the Department of Social and Health Services, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, for funds that currently support the QA for the assessment system (CMAP). The allocation to support QA would be direct from the Legislature to the AOC.

Alternatives explored

The SCJA, WAJCA, and AOC have explored alternatives to consolidate the QA system. To the extent of delicate cooperation, the QA roles have worked together to join their work. These efforts are personality driven and not sustainable, situated for growth, and have no solid foundation. The only way to strategically improve the QA system to meet the future demands is to define and streamline QA in the way described in the decision package. This system will prevent additional QA roles for newly created EBPs to reside outside the court structure. This system will also better serve agencies that provide EBPs (existing or newly created), specifically JRA.

Distinction between one-time and ongoing costs and budget impacts in future biennia

This is an ongoing cost but not a new budget request requiring new revenue. These funds would be transferred from the Department of Social and Health Services to the Administrative Office of the Courts.

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Effects of non-funding

We anticipate that funding for these services will be supported by the legislature because of the legislative interest in preserving outcomes of the work of the juvenile courts and have reduced recidivism and are expected to reduce future prison costs for the state. Should the QA system not be consolidated as this decision package details, the QA system will be more vulnerable than it has in past years because of the expected expansion and splintering that is currently being done.

Expenditure Calculations and Assumptions

Currently, there are approximately 4.75 FTEs that have responsibility to the QA system for juvenile court assessment and programs. These positions are supplemented by grant funded positions at the Center for Court Research. The decision package articulates a vision and plan to improve reporting and QA based on standards, and details how the positions will be repurposed to serve the courts and our partners in EBP quality assurance. The system is currently meeting the courts needs, but will fail to meet the future demands or enhancements that will provide better information to the courts and outside stakeholders.

Today, the QA specialists technically work for different agencies (1 FTE for JRA, 1 FTE for AOC, 1 FTE for Snohomish County, and .4 FTE for Cowlitz County). The cost assumptions in the decision package reflect a standard salary for the QA specialists and QA liaison as they would be as AOC employees. The strategy also allows for assignment of software and querying/reporting staff to assist the juvenile courts. This role is parceled out to various individuals and is not clearly defined.

Object Detail	FY2014	FY2015	Total
Staff Costs	$ 418,000	$ 418,000	$ 836,000
Non-Staff Costs	$ 250,000	$ 250,000	$ 500,000
Total Objects	**$ 668,000**	**$ 668,000**	**$1,336,000**

Included above are:

- $282,000 for 3 QA specialists for each year
- $57,000 for Administrative Support for each year
- $150,000 per year for ART Contracts
- $100,000 per year for FFT Contracts
- $47,000 per year for .5 software and reporting expert
- $32,000 per year for support from Management Services Division.

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