

2015-2017 BIENNIAL BUDGET REQUEST

Instructions for Completing Decision Package Templates

Below are links to the Adobe fillable forms used to propose decision packages for possible inclusion in the 2015-2017 biennial budget request. Tips for writing effective decision package may be found in this document, as well as a link to a sample detailed decision package.

[Preliminary Decision Package](#)

[Detailed Decision Package Template](#)

For the preliminary decision package, you need only complete the highlighted areas as shown on the form.

Your preliminary budget request may then be selected for revision and/or further development. Please use the second link and provide all the information requested if you are asked to complete a detailed decision package.

Misspelled words will be underlined in the fillable fields. When hovering over or right-clicking on the word indicated, suggested alternate spellings will be offered.

If you experience difficulty with the forms, please contact Jan Nutting at jan.nutting@courts.wa.gov

Decision Package Writing Tips

Following are suggestions for producing an effective decision package.

- **Consider your audience.**
When developing the decision package, remember that the Supreme Court and Washington State Legislature are the ultimate audiences to whom you are writing. Both will need clear and concise information, not only to make funding recommendations and decisions, but also to communicate the recommendations and decisions to others who can influence the process.
- **Use plain English.**
Jargon and acronyms should be avoided. The narrative should be clear to an audience that may not be familiar with the issue being discussed.
- **Use peer review.**
Ask others to read, review and critique the narrative. Often those not immersed in the issue can identify areas in the narrative that could be strengthened or eliminated.
- **Emphasize the results and outcomes.**
The Supreme Court and the legislature need to understand not only what is being purchased (goods and services) they also need to understand the benefits that will be derived.
- **The title of the decision package is part of the sales pitch.** Avoid titles like "*FTE Increase.*"

- **Graphs and tables may be useful.**

If a graph and/or table will add value, include it in the decision package.

- **Legislative staff has limited time; legislators have even less.**

The decision package should contain clear and concise language that addresses the issue, recommends a solution, and identifies the benefits.

The questions below should also be considered when developing a decision package

- What do you want the reader to know?
- What do you want the reader to retain?
- Does the narrative emphasize facts, statistics and sources that are respected?
- Does the narrative fully and thoroughly explain assumptions?
- Does the narrative include sufficient (but not too much) background and explanation?
- Is the narrative convincing?
- Is the proposed solution congruent with the agency's mission?
- Why will the public be better off as a result of the proposed solution?
- How will you know you are getting the benefits? Are the benefits measurable?
- Is there a non-budgetary way to deal with the problem? Will changes to administrative policy, court rule or law suffice?
- Is the amount being requested too small?
- Is the problem currently visible to the public or policymakers? Are there newspaper articles, letters from the public, surveys or complaint tracking systems that can help support the proposal?
- Does the proposed solution address an urgent problem? How serious are the risks if action is not taken? Can existing fund sources be used or re-programmed to address the issue?
- Is the amount requested reasonable, considering the problem to be addressed? Are the details of what is being requested reasonable?
- Is there a way to accomplish it without adding FTEs?
- What is the economic outlook?

The Budget Development, Review, and Submittal Schedule can be found here: [Budget Development Timeline](#)

A sample decision package can be found here: [Sample Detailed Decision Package](#)

Management Services Division contact information may be found here: [MSD Contact Information](#)