

Alaska House of Representatives

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House Finance Subcommittee Alaska Court System

Fiscal Year 2015 Operating Budget Narrative Report

February 28, 2014

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The House Finance Subcommittee for the Alaska Court System submits a recommended operating budget for the Fiscal Year 2015 to the House Finance Committee as follows:

Fund Source (in thousands)

Unrestricted general funds (UGF)	\$ 111,436.0
Designated general funds (DGF)	\$ 518.0
Other funds	\$ 1,967.0
<u>Federal funds</u>	<u>\$ 1,325.6</u>
Total	\$ 115,246.6

Positions

Permanent Full Time (PFT)	767
Permanent Part Time (PPT)	50
<u>Temporary</u>	<u>21</u>
Total positions	838

BUDGET ACTION:

The House Finance Budget Subcommittee for the Alaska Court System held meetings in 2014, including close-out.

For administrative purposes, the Alaska Court System budget includes the budgets for the Alaska Judicial Council and the Council on Judicial Conduct.

The following are budget action highlights:

- The Subcommittee recommends reductions from the Court System Amended Budget as follows — (\$1,094.8) UGF and (\$100.0) in Federal funds, for a total reduction of (\$1,194.8) in all funds. The Subcommittee maintains the same number of full-time and part-time positions as the Court System's budget request.

The Subcommittee recommends accepting the Alaska Court System's budget proposal with the following adjustments:

Accept

\$173.8 UGF for increased overhead

- \$23.5 UGF — for utility cost increases in Fairbanks and Emmonak
- \$46.0 UGF — for facility maintenance services including snow removal, janitorial services and other service contracts
- \$104.3 UGF — for existing lease increases
 - \$68.9 for Nome, Dillingham, Unalaska, Homer, Glennallen, Bethel, Cordova, Kake and Sand Point
 - \$27.1 for Juneau
 - \$8.3 for Palmer

\$ 460.3 MHTAAR for Therapeutic Courts

The subcommittee recommends adopting all three of the Mental Health Trust Authority recommendations totaling \$460.3 MHTAAR receipts (Other Funds) to continue the Mental Health efforts in the Therapeutic Courts appropriation. These items include:

- \$245.9 IncT (FY 15- FY 17) to maintain Fairbanks Juvenile Therapeutic Court
- \$204.4 IncT (FY 14 – FY 16) to continue Juneau Mental Health Court funding to provide a therapeutic court alternative for Trust beneficiaries.
- \$10.0 IncT OTI to provide training to Therapeutic Court Professionals

(\$335.5) UGF funding reduction for Health Insurance and Working Reserve Rate Decrease.

The Court System FY 15 Budget includes a reduction from savings realized in a decrease rate for Health Insurance (from \$1,389 to \$1371 per month) and a decrease in Working Reserve Rate (leave cash-in, terminal leave and unemployment insurance) from 3.94 % to 3.56%.

Modify

\$318.0 UGF for Wide Area Network (WAN) Bandwidth Expansion

Additional bandwidth is needed by the Court System. The original request was for a \$636.1 increase for 29 of the 39 locations throughout the state. The \$318.0 modified increment amount recommended by the Subcommittee represents a funding increase for this item which is equivalent to 50% of the averaged Wide Area Network encumbrance of the 29 locations requesting an increase for FY 15, based on figures provided by the Court System.

\$75.0 UGF for Operating Systems and Replacement of Outdated Equipment

Automation of its case management system requires the Court System to update its operating systems to be compatible with updated software and to replace outdated equipment. The original request was for a \$175.0 increase and included updates to the Appellate Courts and Administration and Support Operating Systems. The \$75.0 modified increment recommended by the Subcommittee represent the funding increase for this item which is equivalent to the amount needed to update the Trial Courts Operating Systems and Equipment.

\$20.0 UGF for Trial Courts Interpreter and Translation Services

Federal Legislation requires the courts to provide language assistance to participate in court matters. The original request was for a \$25,0. The \$20.0 modified increment recommended by the Subcommittee represents an 80 percent increase to the base funding for the translation and interpreter service.

\$53.5 UGF for costs of Court Appointed Visitors in Conservatorships Cases

In FY 14 the Office of Public Advocacy determined that it could no longer fund the costs for court appointed visitors in conservatorship cases. The court, therefore, must now pay for fees associated with the required court appointed visitors. The original request was for \$107.0. The \$53.5 modified increment recommended by the Subcommittee is based on a new estimate provided by the Court System.

The Subcommittee recommends the House Finance Committee reviews the Department of Administration, Office of Public Advocacy Budget to determine if the cost of Court Appointed Visitors in Conservatorship cases is not being funded in two locations.

Deny

\$400 UGF for Security Screening Services

The Subcommittee determined that the Court System's request for increased security screening for six court facilities was not justified by incident reports provided by the Court System.

\$200.0 UGF for increased caseload due to implementation of a policy restricting cases that will be considered for sentencing plea agreements

The subcommittee determined that there was not sufficient justification to fund this increment request.

\$20.0 UGF for Judicial Council Advertising Expenses

The Subcommittee did not feel the additional funding was necessary for the Judicial Council to perform its duties.

AMENDMENT ACTION:

There were no amendments to the Alaska Court System budget.

OTHER ACTIONS:

The Subcommittee deleted \$100.0 unrealized federal pass-through funding to non-profit entities. There was a potential at one time for the Court System to receive some Indian and Child Welfare Act (ICWA) funding but it never came into fruition.

The Subcommittee removes conditional language stating budget requests from agencies of the judicial branch are transmitted as requested by the Governor. This language is only applicable at the time Governor transmits the Alaska Court System budget to the legislature.

INTENT LANGUAGE: It is the intent of the legislature that the legislative committees may assist the Alaska Judicial Council in public outreach throughout the communities of Alaska through facilitation of public meetings and outreach to augment the Alaska Judicial Council's work on all activities including selection and retention of Judicial officials. This support may include office space, video and telecommunications, and any other accommodation deemed reasonable by committee chairs. The chairs may expend funds in assisting non-advocacy public outreach.


ATTACHED REPORTS:

The House Finance Budget Subcommittee on the Alaska Court System adopts the attached reports that relate to the House Structure:

Subcommittee Generated Reports:

- Budget Action Worksheet (Informational)
- Legislative Finance Division Reports (Numbers Only) - House Structure
- Agency Totals - FY2015 Operating Budget
- Appropriation/Allocation Summary (All Funds)
- Appropriation/Allocation Summary (General Funds)
- Transaction Comparison between Adjusted Base and House Subcommittee
- Wordage Report - Fiscal Year 2015 Operating Budget

Respectfully submitted,



Representative Bill Stoltze, Chair

House Finance Subcommittee on the Alaska Court System Budget