

Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee
Budget Change Proposals for 2017-2018
Action by E-Mail between Meetings
August 8, 2016

On July 7, 2016, The Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee approved and prioritized seven budget change proposals (BCP). The committee asked Judicial Council Budget Services to prepare proposed dollar amounts to be requested for the approved BCPs, consistent with the prior practice of estimating the costs necessary to support the BCP, save for the Civil Assessment Backfill which was set at \$48 million and the Language Access Plan which was set at \$8.3 million. The committee asked for the information to be brought back to the members for an email vote which would take place within five business days of the information being provided.

Judicial Council Budget Services recommends the following amounts for the approved BCPs:

- 1. Trial Court Operations Discretionary Funding and Employee Compensation.** Proposed ongoing augmentation of \$158 million in support of trial court operations, which will allow the trial courts to hire additional staff, retain existing staff, and improve the public's access to justice. The request consists of the following: 1) \$117.506 million, the equivalent of 5 percent of the amount of funding needed by the trial courts based on the 2016–2017 Workload-Based Allocation and Funding Methodology (WAFM) estimate, to reduce the gap between the funding needed to support trial court operations and the funding available; and 2) \$40.983 million to fund the equivalent of a 2.5% cost of living increase for all trial court employees, consistent with the salary increases provided for executive branch staff in FY 2015–2016 and half of the 5% increase for state employees of the judicial branch in FY 2016–2017 and FY 2017–2018; The \$40.983 million augmentation would be utilized to provide any of the following (or any combination thereof): the reduction or elimination of budget reduction-related concessions such as furloughs, reduced work weeks, previously enacted or planned future layoffs; a cost of living increase; enhanced employee benefits; or to address other personnel matters as deemed appropriate by each trial court in negotiations with their related employee representatives.
- 2. Dependency Counsel.** Proposed ongoing augmentation of \$22 million to support court-appointed dependency counsel workload. The need based on the current workload model to achieve the Judicial Council's statewide caseload standard of 141 clients per attorney is \$202.9 million. This request represents 25 percent of the \$88.2 million required to fully fund the adequate and competent representation for parents and children at every stage of the dependency proceeding, from the initial detention hearing until the court terminates its jurisdiction.
- 3. New Judgeships (AB 159).** Proposed augmentation of \$8.3 million for 10 of the 50 trial court judgeships authorized by AB 159. This includes \$8.2 million in ongoing funding (\$117,000 one-time) for the 10 judgeships and accompanying support staff. While the latest Judicial Needs Assessment (2014) shows that the branch needs just over 269 judgeships based on workload metrics, efforts to secure funding for the 50 previously-authorized judgeships have been unsuccessful. This request for a more modest amount of 10 judgeships to begin to address the critical resource shortfalls in trial courts with the greatest need.

4. **Civil Assessment Backfill.** Not applicable. Dollar amount already approved at \$48 million.
5. **Self-Help Services.** Proposed ongoing augmentation of \$22 million to support self-help centers in trial court facilities. The need, based on a 2006 survey to support self-help centers in all trial court facilities, is \$44 million. Currently, \$11.2 million is allocated for self-help centers and this request represents approximately 67 percent of the \$32.8 million remaining need. This request will allocate \$20 million for attorney and qualified paralegal staff at each court and \$2 million to promote cooperative projects across county lines such as increased technology, sharing of bilingual resources, and ideas to provide services as cost-effectively as possible.
6. **Language Access Plan Implementation.** Not applicable. Dollar amount already approved at \$8.3 million.
7. **Increased Costs for New Court Facilities.** This proposal would address increased operating costs for new facilities opening in 2017-2018 (operations and maintenance, utilities, and insurance). As there are currently no new facilities scheduled to open in 2017-2018, this BCP will not be submitted.