

Seattle Municipal Court

Fred Bonner, Presiding Judge

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Department Description

The Municipal Court of Seattle is the largest limited jurisdiction court in Washington. The Court is authorized by the State of Washington and the Seattle Municipal Code to hear and decide both criminal and civil matters. The Municipal Court of Seattle is committed to excellence in providing fair, accessible, and timely resolution of alleged violations of the Seattle Municipal Code in an atmosphere of respect for the public, employees and other government entities. The Municipal Court of Seattle values and recognizes its employees. The Municipal Court of Seattle is a contributing partner working toward a safe and vital community.

Working with community organizations, the Court has eased access for citizens with suspended driver's licenses by developing and initiating programs to make it easier for citizens to regain their licenses, including holding a special driving court one night per week. The probation/court compliance staff monitors defendant compliance with court-ordered conditions, assesses the treatment needs of defendants, and helps direct defendants to resources that will help them live successfully in the community. The Court continues to leverage additional outside agency resources with City funds to support defendants through successful completion of court orders. Work crews, community service and electronic home monitoring are used as alternatives to jail sentencing. The Mental Health Court, established in 1999, is a defendant-based program and is nationally recognized for serving misdemeanor offenders who are mentally ill or developmentally disabled.

The Court continues to lead judicial administrative reform, working closely with the King County District Court and Superior Courts in organizing common court services. Community Involved Justice is taking on new meaning with the placement of social support and treatment services on site. These services, once located throughout the community are now housed in the Justice Center, thereby providing immediate access.

Proposed Policy and Program Changes

The 2004 Proposed Budget reflects the Court's operational efficiencies, increased organizational performance, defendant-focused case management and continued utilization of confinement alternatives such as work crews, community service, electronic home monitoring and researching the possibility of day reporting modeled off of King County, while increasing community involved justice initiatives through the utilization of outside grant funds. Services have been streamlined, generating savings in court technology funding and within the Policy, Planning and Development Group. Through the use of the Grant to Encourage Arrest Policies, two positions are added to the Court Compliance program to carry out domestic violence prevention activities.

In addition, the Court has imposed a selective hiring freeze in 2004 to support budget reductions.

Municipal Court

Appropriations	Summit Code	2002 Actual	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed	2004 Proposed
Court Administration Budget Control Level	M3000	4,377,828	4,394,506	4,512,367	4,433,291
Court Compliance Budget Control Level	M4000	4,123,603	4,272,533	4,416,414	4,113,632
Court Operations Budget Control Level	M2000	11,004,455	10,782,153	11,152,095	10,958,267
Department Total		19,505,886	19,449,192	20,080,876	19,505,190
Department Full-time Equivalents Total*		255.69	227.85	227.35	229.35

**FTE totals provided for information only (2002 FTE reflect adopted numbers). Authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.*

Resources

General Subfund	19,505,886	19,449,192	20,080,876	19,505,190
Total	19,505,886	19,449,192	20,080,876	19,505,190

Selected Midyear Performance Measures

The Court is seeking to improve public trust and confidence through its programs and processes. It will do this by making the court process more understandable, and by providing services that benefit the community. The Court is currently engaged in a state-wide effort to develop performance standards for limited jurisdiction courts. Through this process, the Court will develop standards that will be consistent with other state courts and provide meaningful outcome reports to our community.

Court Administration Budget Control Level

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Court Administration Budget Control Level is to provide administrative controls, develop and provide strategic direction, establish structure and provide a consistent approach for decision-making, and provide policy and program development.

Program Summary

Reduce funds for Court Technology consultants and software purchases by \$20,000, and eliminate budgeted hours for an intermittent Systems Programmer Analyst, for a savings of \$52,000. This position assists with the maintenance of the Court's information system, Municipal Court Information System (MCIS), as well as general service requests. Existing staff continues to provide the same level of service for maintenance and high priority service requests.

Transfer 1.0 FTE Administrative Specialist II and \$54,000 to Court Administration from Court Operations. This position provides direct administrative support to the Court Administrator and various directors in Court Administration and is better aligned with that Line of Business.

Reduce a Strategic Advisor I position in the Policy and Program Development Group (PPDG) by 0.5 FTE, from full- to half-time; eliminate associated salary and benefits funding of \$38,000 for the position. Although the reduction in this position may affect the Court's ability to identify, apply for, and manage grants, a recent reorganization in the PPDG has restructured and streamlined the work of this unit and minimizes the impact of this change.

As per Ordinance #121033, passed in December 2002, abrogate 1.0 FTE Administrative Staff Assistant, and 1.0 FTE Management Systems Analyst in Court Administration and add 1.0 FTE Strategic Advisor 1 and 1.0 FTE Strategic Advisor 2. Transfer in 1.0 FTE Strategic Advisor 2 to Court Administration from Court Compliance.

Citywide adjustments to inflation assumptions reduce the budget by \$23,000, for a total reduction from the 2004 Endorsed Budget of approximately \$79,000.

Expenditures/FTE	2002 Actual	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed	2004 Proposed
Court Administration	4,377,828	4,394,506	4,512,367	4,433,291
Full-time Equivalents Total*	42.50	37.50	37.00	38.50

**FTE totals provided for information only (2002 FTE reflect adopted numbers). Authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.*

Municipal Court

Court Compliance Budget Control Level

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Court Compliance Budget Control Level is to help defendants understand the Court's expectations and to assist them in successfully complying with court orders.

Program Summary

Add 1.0 FTE Planning and Development Specialist I and 1.0 FTE Probation Counselor I to the Court Compliance program. The positions were added during 2003 to carry out domestic violence prevention activities as authorized and funded by the Grant to Encourage Arrest Policies received from the United States Department of Justice. The two positions were added in February 2003 per ordinance #121072 and sunset when grant funds are no longer available. Because the expenditures were authorized in this ordinance, the appropriation associated with these grant-funded positions does not appear in the Proposed Budget.

Add 0.5 FTE Administrative Specialist II to keep up with the demand for services of the Court's Re-licensing Program. The Court's program has nearly doubled the number of clients/defendants served in the past two years, causing a disproportionate increase in the number of defendants screened and/or served by the existing 1.0 FTE. Evaluations have shown that the Court's in-house re-licensing service is the most widely used and most successful component to the program. Funds in the Court Compliance Budget Control Level will be redirected to cover the cost of the position.

As per Ordinance #121033, passed in December 2002, abrogate 1.0 FTE Probation Supervisor and add 1.0 FTE Strategic Advisor 2. Transfer out 1.0 FTE Strategic Advisor 2 from Court Compliance to Court Administration.

Implement a 2.5% vacancy rate in the Court Compliance program, reducing funds available for salaries and benefits by \$286,000. Due to staff turnover and resulting vacancies, the Court has under spent its budget for personnel services over the past three years. Vacancies will be subject to an internal review and approval process to ensure that the 2.5% vacancy rate target is met. Customer service impacts are expected to be minimal.

Citywide adjustments to inflation assumptions reduce the budget by \$17,000, for a total reduction from the 2004 Endorsed Budget of approximately \$303,000.

Expenditures/FTE	2002 Actual	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed	2004 Proposed
Court Compliance	4,123,603	4,272,533	4,416,414	4,113,632
Full-time Equivalents Total*	56.85	51.35	51.35	52.85

**FTE totals provided for information only (2002 FTE reflect adopted numbers). Authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.*

Court Operations Budget Control Level

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Court Operations Budget Control Level is to hold hearings and address all legal requirements for defendants and others who come before the Court. Some proceedings are held in a formal courtroom and others in magistrate offices with the goal of providing timely resolution of alleged violations of City ordinances and misdemeanor crimes committed within the City of Seattle limits.

Program Summary

Implement a 2.5% Vacancy Rate in the Court Operations program, reducing funds available for salaries and benefits by \$91,000. Due to staff turnover and resulting vacancies, the Court has under spent its budget for personnel services over the past three years. Vacancies will be subject to an internal review and approval process to ensure that the 2.5% vacancy rate target is met. Customer service impacts are expected to be minimal.

Transfer out 1.0 FTE Administrative Specialist II and \$54,000 to Court Administration from Court Operations. This position provides direct administrative support to the Court administrator and various directors in Court administration and is better aligned with that Budget Control Level.

Citywide adjustments to inflation assumptions reduce the budget by \$49,000, for a total reduction from the 2004 Endorsed Budget of approximately \$194,000.

Expenditures/FTE	2002 Actual	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed	2004 Proposed
Court Operations	11,004,455	10,782,153	11,152,095	10,958,267
Full-time Equivalents Total*	156.34	139.00	139.00	138.00

**FTE totals provided for information only (2002 FTE reflect adopted numbers). Authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.*