

Washington State Judicial Branch

2024 Supplemental Budget

Support Staff Reclassification on State Salary Schedule

Agency: Office of Public Defense

Decision Package Code/Title: BJ – Support Staff Reclassification

Agency Recommendation Summary Text:

The Office of Public Defense (OPD) requests funding to reclassify the agency's Program and Administrative Assistants to a salary commensurate with the work that is performed and the experience required for these positions. (General Fund-State)

Fiscal Summary:

	FY 2024	FY 2025	Biennial	FY 2026	FY 2027	Biennial
Staffing						
FTEs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001-1	\$94,616	\$155,740	\$250,356	\$195,358	\$233,816	\$429,174
Total Expenditures						
	\$94,616	\$155,740	\$250,356	\$195,358	\$233,816	\$429,174

Package Description:

Background and Current Situation:

Job postings for OPD support staff positions are generating extremely low and unqualified applicant pools. In the past this has led to reopening job announcements several times and limited numbers of applicants.

The Administrative and Program Assistants employed by OPD do complex work to support the many activities assigned to OPD programs. Among other duties, OPD Assistants are responsible for compiling non-unified data from multiple sources and regions around the state, tracking and analyzing this data, and preparing materials for statewide presentations and reporting back to Washington residents.

Administrative and Program Assistant work at OPD is unique and specialized. OPD is not a law firm or typical public defense agency, but it must understand how law firms and local public defense agencies work. OPD's roles encompass fiscal, programmatic, and administrative functions on a statewide basis. Every staff member needs to perform at a high level and is expected to complete voluminous and complex work daily.

Problem:

In comparing salary ranges for assistants at state and local government agencies in and around Thurston County, current salaries for OPD program assistants are not competitive. The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) recently reclassified certain segments of its program support staff due to recruitment and retention issues similar to those experienced at OPD.

Thurston County has a non-union Administrative Assistant II classification with the salary range of \$54,384 to \$72,336 per year. Pierce County has an Administrative Assistant classification with the salary range of \$61,610 to \$76,752.

Administrative and Program Assistants at OPD do work comparable to these county positions with regard to agency-wide policies, procedures and function, as well as provide specialized support to the program they are assigned to.

In addition, the costs for human resources staff and supervisor time spent on tasks as a result of losing an employee and having to hire a replacement can be as high as \$3,000, including time spent recruiting, interviewing, hiring and training the new employee. This money is better spent retaining existing talent.

Proposed Solution:

OPD requests funding to reclassify the agency's Program Assistants and Administrative Assistants from Range 50 Step A and Step C on the state salary schedule to Range 50 Step E and Step G. Current compensation for the positions at Step A-C ranges from \$51,384 to \$53,964 annually. Compensation at the proposed Step E-G will be \$56,676 to \$59,616 annually.

OPD historically has been fortunate in hiring and onboarding individuals who are passionate about the mission, vision and values of OPD. It is important to retain this valuable talent. People entering the workforce tend to explore careers and find workplaces and fair compensation that give them the highest possible return on their job investments. Many people also want to be part of something bigger than themselves. They find this at OPD. When that connection is achieved, the goal is keeping talented employees.

Fully describe and quantify expected impacts on state residents.

Reclassifying OPD Program and Administrative Assistants will position OPD to retain talented employees and recruit exceptional individuals who will administer public defense services for state residents.

Explain what alternatives were explored by the agency and why this was the best option chosen.

OPD previously reclassified the salaries of some support staff positions, effective April 1, 2022. The reclassification aligned staff salaries across similar positions and brought salaries to a competitive level at that time. The current tight labor market requires an additional reclassification to bring OPD Administrative and Program Assistant position salaries to a level comparable to similar positions in neighboring agencies.

What are the consequences of not funding this request?

Talented, hardworking individuals who believe in and support the mission, vision and values of OPD may go elsewhere for employment in order to better support themselves and their families.

Is this an expansion or alteration of a current program or service?

No.

Decision Package expenditure, FTE and revenue assumptions:

Staffing Assumptions

Job Title Classification					Workload Assumptions/Description
	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	
Administrative Support Salaries	\$80,868	\$133,111	\$166,973	\$199,843	Reclassify administrative positions from Range 50 Steps A and C to Range 50 Steps E and G
Benefits .17%	\$13,748	\$22,629	\$28,385	\$33,973	With Periodic Increment Dates going forward

How does the package relate to the Judicial Branch principal policy objectives?

Fair and Effective Administration of Justice

The fair and effective administration of justice depends upon OPD's ability to recruit and retain staff to implement the agency's mission, which is: To uphold the rights of all people who are facing the loss of liberty or family by providing statewide leadership, administration and support to the multidisciplinary public defense profession.

Access to Necessary Representation

This request will help OPD retain valuable staff who implement the agency's statutory duty to ensure the right to counsel.

Sufficient Staffing and Support

This request supports OPD's efforts to maintain an appropriately staffed and effectively managed judicial branch agency.

Are there impacts to other governmental entities?

No.

Stakeholder response:

OPD-contracted attorneys and local government public defense partners expect OPD to be able to support their requests for information and technical assistance. It is expected these stakeholders will support this Decision Package.

Are there legal or administrative mandates that require this package to be funded?

No.

Does current law need to be changed to successfully implement this package?

No.

Are there impacts to state facilities?

No.

Are there other supporting materials that strengthen the case for this request?

- See attached job and salary descriptions for Administrative Assistant positions at Pierce and Thurston counties.
- See Washington State Salary Schedule at https://ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/shr/CompensationAndJobClasses/Salary%20Schedules/2023SalarySchedules/July_1_2023_Final/GS_NonRep_2023Jul1.pdf

Are there information technology impacts?

No.

Agency Contact:

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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Department: Multiple
Job Class #: 111300
Pay Range: General 21

\$61,610 - \$76,752

FLSA: Non-Exempt
Represented: Both

Classification descriptions are intended to present a descriptive list of the range of duties performed by employees in this class and are not intended to reflect all duties performed within the job.

GENERAL FUNCTION: This is administrative work for the head of a department or upper management performing a wide variety of administrative/ clerical duties including handling confidential and sensitive information, composing correspondence, report writing, coordinating schedules, investigative research and other related tasks.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

- Provide administrative services to the head of a department or upper management; make arrangements for meetings and notifies conferees, maintain calendar, arrange for travel, transportation and accommodation, answer questions on status of current projects exercising discretion in the type of information given, make appointment, relay messages of confidential nature.
- Maintain and update appointments to appropriate Boards and Commissions. Handle related correspondence; compose letters and responses to correspondence and memoranda.
- Assist in the management of the office. Develop and recommend office policies and procedures. Implement changes subject to approval of supervisor.
- Participate in the collection of data and preparation of complex reports requiring thorough knowledge of departmental operations, procedures and regulations. Conduct research and special studies in needed areas and prepare reports with recommendation for corrective actions.
- Represent supervisor or department at meetings; address administrative and policy matters, explain and interpret complex rules, policies and operating procedures. Provide information and advice concerning specialized or technical services rendered and related office functions including response to difficult problems and questions raised by the public or by employees.
- Control expenditures in accordance with budget allocations by reviewing proposed expenditures.
- Perform purchasing functions including recommending necessary purchases, contacting vendors and comparing prices on large-scale outlay items.
- Manage personnel files, notify managers of forthcoming evaluations, and manage confidential data, track contracts and advise managers of renewal and expiration dates.
- Calculate and maintain payroll function.
- Maintain regular, predictable and punctual attendance during regularly scheduled work hours at assigned worksite.
- Meet travel requirements of the position.
- Perform the physical requirements of the position; work within the established working conditions of the position.
- Work a flexible schedule, which may include evenings, weekends, holidays and overtime.

OTHER JOB FUNCTIONS:

- Assist in the coordination of activities of clerical support staff.
- Perform portions of professional level assignments.
- May attend and prepare minutes of meetings.
- Provide backup to support staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Classification Description - Pierce County

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- Perform other related duties as require

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED:

Work is performed under general supervision with the employee expected to plan and complete work independently after objectives, priorities and deadlines have been defined. Work is performed with considerable latitude for independent judgment and is reviewed in progress and upon completion by the supervisor for thoroughness, timeliness and compliance with regulations, policies and procedures. This position does not supervise but may provide training and guidance.

WORK ENVIRONMENT: The work environment characteristics described herein are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of the position. The Administrative Assistant typically works in an office environment on a daily basis; incumbents may be required to work at a desk or other work station for prolonged periods; constant attention to detail is required. Ability to concentrate with frequent interruptions and general office noise is required.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS: The physical demands described herein are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions. Physical activities required are finger dexterity necessary to operate equipment used in the position, talking, seeing and hearing. Walking, sitting, bending/stooping, pushing/pulling and minimal unassisted lifting associated with the job duties is required.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

Knowledge of:

- Administrative and general office practice and procedures.
- Basic accounting and arithmetic.
- Proper grammar, usage and spelling.

Skill in:

- Using various computer programs relevant to the performance of the job.

Ability to:

- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive matters.
- Function independently with little supervision.
- Operate, supervise and instruct others in the operation of office equipment.
- Understand and apply guidelines to various situations, and to follow clearly stated and oral and written instructions.
- Establish and maintain effective communications, both orally and in writing, with staff, other departments, the general public and the press in a professional manner..
- Compose a variety of memoranda or letters, expressing ideas clearly and concisely with only general instructions.
- Compile and analyze fiscal, statistical, and other information and data.
- Stenographic work at an acceptable level of proficiency as may be required.
- Conduct thorough investigative research and make recommendations for action.
- Use a typewriter, word processor or personal computer at an acceptable level of proficiency as required for the position. Understand and follow written and verbal instructions.
- Work effectively and productively with others.
- Communicate effectively verbally and in writing to audiences of various social, cultural, ethnic, educational and economic backgrounds.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

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- Effectively coordinate, perform and complete multiple duties and assignments concurrently and in a timely manner.
- Meet the travel requirements of the position, if any.
- Physically perform the essential job functions of the classification.
- Ability to physically perform the essential job functions.
- Ability to meet the travel requirements of position.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO APPLY:

Three or more years of progressively responsible clerical/administrative experience which includes experience directly related to the duties of the position. Additional education or experience may substitute for the recruiting requirements.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS AND/OR QUALIFICATIONS: A valid Washington State driver's license may be required when travel is required of the position.



Administrative Assistant II - NonU

Class Code:
0331 NonU Range 10

Bargaining Unit:

THURSTON COUNTY
Established Date: Jan 1, 1997
Revision Date: Aug 22, 2022

\$54,384 - \$72,336

SALARY RANGE

\$4,532.00 - \$6,028.00 Monthly

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Administrative Assistant II is responsible for providing a full range of administrative and technical support to a Department/Office, which may include responsibility for departmental accounting including participation with the preparation and monitoring of the Department/Office budget. Participates as a member of the Department/Office management team and assists in the development of policies and procedures. The Administrative Assistant II may also be assigned responsibility to provide full administrative support to a Board, including managing the Board appointment process, managing the Board budget and expenditures, responding to citizens on behalf of the Board, and performing research and creating reports. Methods of accomplishing tasks are usually the responsibility of the employee, with work reviewed only periodically to measure results.

This class specification reflects the general concept and intent of the classification and should not be construed as a detailed statement of all the work requirements that may be inherent in a position.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:

Provides full administrative and technical support for a Department/Office, including responsibility for overseeing all departmental accounting functions, which may include assisting with development and monitoring of the Department/Office budget.

Approves routine expenditures. Prepares financial records; compiles data and prepares estimates, statements, statistical reports, billings, and other business reports.

Researches and drafts recommendations on procedures and activities within the Department/Office.

May be assigned responsibility to provide full administrative support to a Board, including managing the Board appointment process, managing the Board budget and expenditures, responding to citizens on behalf of the Board, scheduling meetings and events, performing research and creating reports and independently conducting follow-up assignments.

Performs research and compiles data. Designs databases and other programs to track and analyze information and prepares materials for presentations, as needed.

Handles inquiries and requests by citizens, the Commissioner's Office or other offices/departments. Serves as a contact point for requests and information gathering and problem solving. Assists in resolving complaints or requests.

May be assigned supervising responsibilities.

Performs miscellaneous duties requested by the Director. Coordinates projects between staff members and follows up with staff on issues/projects on behalf of the Director.

Performs other duties as assigned.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES:

Positions assigned to the Administrative Assistant II classification are distinguished by the responsibility to provide full administrative and technical support to a Department/Office or Board and may be assigned supervisory and budget management responsibilities. Methods of accomplishing tasks are usually the responsibility of the employee, with work reviewed only periodically to measure results.

WORKING CONDITIONS:

Work is generally performed in an office environment. Manual dexterity is needed to operate a computer keyboard. Lifting and carrying of records or other materials weighing up to 30 lbs. may be required on an occasional basis. May be required to travel to meetings and operate County automobiles.

QUALIFICATIONS:

High School Diploma or GED and one year of college level course work in office support, general business, accounting, or another closely related field.

At least three years experience in a senior level office support position, with at least two years experience providing accounting or budgeting support. *Additional experience may substitute college education year for year.*

Ability to use computer equipment and related software programs is required.

A current Washington State Driver's License may be required.

DESIRED SKILLS:

Knowledge of principles and practices of office management and work organization.

Knowledge of governmental accounting principles and practices.

Ability to effectively communicate both orally and in writing.

Ability to analyze complex office problems and develop and implement sound solutions.

Ability to establish effective working relationships with superiors, subordinates, other organizations and the general public.

0331 Administrative Assistant II

Created: 1985

FLSA: Non-exempt

Non-represented

Salary Chart: NonU / Range 10; 4/2008

History: Admin Change 8/2022; Admin Changes 3/2020; Revised 1/97; Revised ADA 10/92;
Revised 6/18/85

